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# COMICS scene

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# WORD BALLOONS

My fevered brain created Zzutak, the creature that should not exist!" If ever there were words that promised a spine-tingling, thrill-packed comic book reading experience, these are surely them. Not convinced? Try this one on for size: "I learned the dread secret of the Blip!" Now, if you're any kind of right-thinking comic book lover with red blood coursing through your veins, you simply cannot resist the promise of that tag line. So, for the time being, put aside the question of whether Spider-Man is really a clone, or if Superman will ever be Clark Kent again, and travel back to the days when giant misshapen creatures roamed the comic-book universe and there was nary a superhero in sight to stop them. That's the signpost up ahead; next stop: the Age of Monsters!

In all the world, what could be more enjoyable than comics about huge monsters bashing up stuff? No pretensions, no psychological overtones, no redeeming pro-social value, just some big mook tearing up everything in sight until dispatched by whatever left-field plot device the clever writer could devise for him. Back before the superheroes took over, brutes with names like Rorgg, Orrgo and Googam ran things in what has since become the Marvel Universe, and they did it with a crazy style all their own.

Besides being a lot of fun, Marvel's monster stories of the late '50s and early '60s in *Tales of Suspense*, *Strange Tales*, *Journey Into Mystery* and other titles are good examples of what comics do better than any other medium. While the movies might offer us the cheesy thrills of watching some guy dressed up as Godzilla trashing a model of Tokyo, or maybe some ants magnified to "terrifying" hugeness, comic books have no limitations beyond the imaginations of their creators.

Luckily for all of us, the creators in question here are some of the true legends of the comic book form, writers and artists who went on to build the much-vaunted Marvel Age of Comics. None other than Jack Kirby said of the monsters he drew, "As a staple of absorbing storytelling, these hideous, misshapen tools had no peer." Kirby knew whereof he spoke, for he too had no peer when it came to explosive, visceral comic-book art. And who else but the master of hyperbole, Stan Lee, could think up characters with names like Fin Fang Foom and pen moody monster stories for the incomparable Steve Ditko, with whom he would later make Spider-Man a household name? For an insider's look into these early days at Marvel, check out comics historian Will Murray's interview with Larry Lieber on page 46, in which Lieber describes the challenge of keeping the absurdly prolific Kirby supplied with scripts.

In the pages of their comics, these and other creators teamed up to devise all manner of kooky horrors, from Grottu, King of the Insects to Kraa the Unhuman and Orrgo the Unconquerable. Their creations ran the gamut from the slimiest blobs to the most intangible collection of pure sentient energy. These beings flew, swam, crawled and rampaged across every terrain in full, lurid color. And with no budgetary restraints, they could be sent to demolish a full-sized metropolis, or lead a massive invasion fleet from space without a second thought!

While the movies offered monsters that were a little light in the personality department and, indeed, rarely even spoke, you couldn't get a Marvel monster to shut up. In terms of attitude overkill, the colossal comics creatures were unbeatable. Consider some typical monster dialogue: "Fool—none can withstand the mighty Groot! You are doomed! You and your town shall perish!" For megalomaniacal ranting, you just can't touch these guys: "Behold my power, mortal! Think you to defy me now? I will crush you like an insect! For I am Fin Fang Foom!" Colorful, entertaining and to the point, these massive miscreants displayed personality to spare in a minimum of pages. So, you can keep your ants and your guy in a suit. But hey, call me when the computer-generated FX version of "Sporr, the Thing That Could Not Die" is ready, Mr. Spielberg.

Now, some might ask of what interest all this is to sophisticated, post-Cold War, '90s people like us. It has been well-documented that these stories were driven by society's need to let off steam in the face of the Communist threat and the possibility of atomic annihilation. The quaint anachronisms and the now-hokey conventions of the genre are exactly what give them a new retro-cool cachet. Almost every line in these stories resonates with a delightful new ironic meaning for the reader looking for an alternative to today's "realistic" comics.

"We tried not to get into the anguish of the other Marvel books and give it a sense of fun and excitement," Doug Moench says, in his interview on page 7, about reviving the monster genre with his *Godzilla* comic in the '70s. He had the right idea; fun and excitement are good. Monsters are good. So if you need a break from the bleak, violent comics of today, check out the fun, violent comics of yesterday. And remember, "Many are the wonders of the vast universe, but none so fantastic as...Timm Boo Baa!"

—*Michael Stewart/Managing Editor*

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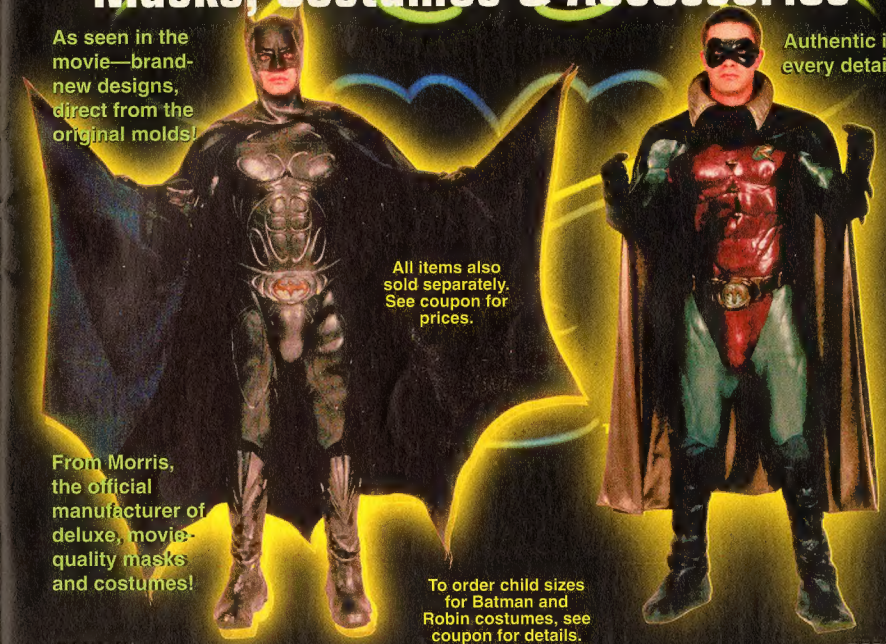

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# Soul of the Night

## *Veteran comic book writer Doug Moench is taking Batman in new directions.*

By PAT JANKIEWICZ

Likable and soft-spoken, Doug Moench has written hundreds of comics and created such tough characters as Deathlok the Demolisher and Moon Knight. While he has penned stories in literally every genre for almost every major comic company, he's especially comfortable hanging out in Gotham City.

He's no stranger to the Batcave or Arkham Asylum either, as he has helped guide the Dark Knight's life for almost 15 years. Moench, who writes the monthly *Batman*, stands alongside Alfred, Robin and editor Denny O'Neil as one of Batman's most trusted friends and advisors.

"I like him," Moench says of the Caped Crusader. "I look at Batman as obsessed, not crazy. He's obsessed not with punishing the person who killed his parents, but with making sure the same thing doesn't happen to anyone else. He went through such a traumatic experience, he doesn't want *anyone else* to go through that.

"In my mind, he *is* Batman—Bruce Wayne is the costume. Bruce is the mask. He only uses Bruce as a way of being Batman. Bruce Wayne's house literally hides the Batcave! It's a cover for what he really is. It gets very Jungian and archetypal, with him being down in the bowels of the Earth and becoming a dark angel. He starts from underground, but when he strikes in the city, he's usually coming down from above."

He's especially excited about his partner on *Batman*. "The monthly book is now being drawn by Kelley Jones! We're having a good time together and working as a natural team. We started on *Batman: Red Rain* and *Dark Joker—The Wild*, and those pretty much set the tone for anything we do.

"The only question was: Would there be a letdown when Kelley had to do this on a monthly basis? Instead, he's doing a great job maintaining the quality of those graphic novels. It's quite a feat when you have to do 22 or 23 pages a month, plus the covers! I love working with Kelley," Moench raves. "We're gonna set the world on fire!"

He also enjoyed taking part in "Knightfall," the acclaimed storyline in which an exhausted Batman is worn down by various foes and ultimately has his back broken by Bane. "Here's a secret behind the comics," he grins. "We have 'Batman summit meetings,' where editors and writers get together and come up with ideas. The ideas are thrown back and forth, picked apart or embellished on. That's where we came up with the 'Knightfall' story.

"We [the Batwriters] went home and started writing our comics. My mission was: 'Start wearing Batman down!' I started by having him not get enough sleep, then he gets really tired and finally, he's exhausted. Then, everybody breaks out of Arkham Asylum and Batman *never* gets any sleep. 'Knightfall' got pushed back, but I had already written the ones where he's tired, so Batman was worn out for months longer than he was supposed to be!

"I didn't look at it as knocking Batman down," he explains. "He's the best athlete on Earth, but he has a natural weakness, and if he did what we show him doing [all-night patrols], he's gonna get pretty tired. To me, it injected a little realism."

Moench put Batman into traction because "it was the only way we thought a guy as obsessed as Bruce Wayne would leave Gotham and have someone else wear the Batman costume!

Art: Kelley Jones

Art: Kelly Jones/John Beatty/Colors: Les Dorscheid

We really wanted to do that storyline and thought, 'Nothing less than breaking his back would make him give it up to someone else.' "

Was breaking the Bat a satisfying experience? "It was momentous, but I had mixed feelings," he confides. "I knew he would recover, so I didn't feel *too* bad, but it was like messing with an institution. I remember the day I did it was like, 'Well, I've done it now!' We had been building up to it for so long that when I actually did it, it wasn't anticlimactic, but it wasn't as shocking as it might have been had I come up with the story right then and there."

Moench was surprised by the media hoopla which accompanied Batman's defeat. As is usual when there's a pivotal change in the fortunes of an extremely well-known superhero character, the mainstream media actually took notice. "We thought it would be a big deal, but we didn't think it would go that far beyond the comics world into the *real* news media.

Godzilla: Copyright 1978 Toho Company Ltd.

**Godzilla rampaged across America in the Marvel series from the '70s, written by Moench.**

**"We're doing some interesting things with the Joker," promises *Batman* writer Doug Moench.**

'Knightfall' back until the whole furor over Superman's death died down!"

In the '70s, the scribe created his own grim, nocturnal avenger in the Batman tradition, Moon Knight, for Marvel Comics. "He started as a villain in *Werewolf by Night*," Moench relates. "Since he fought a werewolf, he was sort of heroic because fighting a werewolf isn't exactly an evil thing to do. You tried to be sympathetic to the werewolf because he was the title character and yet, a guy who goes against him isn't evil. I made Moon Knight a mercenary, so he's a hero with flaws—a villain with redeeming qualities. What would a real person be like who would dress up like that and fight crime? I decided he would be a little bit schizoid.

"I tried to approach Moon Knight as

"They were planning 'The Death of Superman' when we were preparing 'Knightfall.' We didn't know about them and they didn't know about us. When 'The Death of Superman' came out, we were really surprised by the outside press coverage. We held

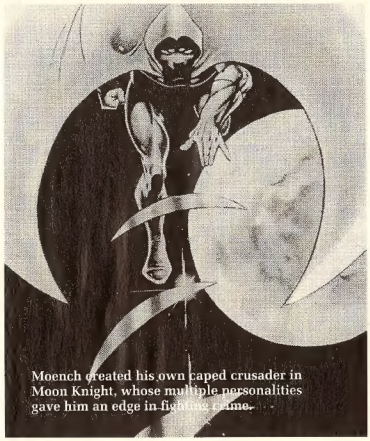
**The crippling of Batman by Bane, the centerpiece of the "Knightfall" saga, was so long in the planning that actually writing it had less impact on Moench than he expected.**

Art: Kelley Jones Design & Layout: Jim McLarnon

realistically as possible in dealing with a costumed hero. I gave him identities as a cab driver, mercenary and millionaire, plus Moon Knight, so he was four different guys. You can't get further from a millionaire than a cabbie. Batman was an influence; I like him because he doesn't have super powers. So when I created my own costumed character, he didn't have powers. Moon Knight had a cape, so it took on a similarity, more than was really intended. I didn't want Moon Knight to be as much like Batman as people perceived him being," he admits.

The writer also enjoys the femme fatales who have bewitched and bedeviled Batman. "I especially love Catwoman," he says. "I even wrote *Catwoman #0*, which was the first time you saw a full Catwoman origin, not just little bits and pieces. The Huntress is also a really good character; in a sense, she's Batman without Batman's scruples.

"She desperately wants Batman's approval, but he won't give it to her because he thinks she's too violent. She's willing to kill and he never would. She's annoyed with him, but respects him so much that she wants his approval. She'll never get that, so there's a nice conflict there."



Moench created his own caped crusader in Moon Knight, whose multiple personalities gave him an edge in fighting crime.

Moon Knight: Copyright 1981 Marvel Comics Group

Another popular mystery woman was Nocturna, a seductress who fancied herself the living embodiment of the night. "I was going through a Marlene Dietrich/Greta Garbo kick at the time I created her," Moench confesses. "I wanted Nocturna to be that pale, ethereal, otherworldly woman who's jaded, but also tragic and fatalistic. That appealed to me a lot.

"I had this image of an exotic woman under moonlight. I liked her because she was haunting—her skin totally white, with long black hair. She was Garbo-esque and mysterious, like the soul of the night itself. I want to bring her back; I mentioned her at a Batman summit, but Denny doesn't want a romance for Batman right now."

Moench has a theory about the Dark Knight's enduring popularity. "Batman's appeal is the fact that he has no powers. He made himself into what he is, it wasn't handed to him on a silver platter by a lightning bolt hitting beakers of chemicals and splashing him, or by him coming from another planet. His origin is the simplest, most primal, classic origin—your parents are killed by evil, so you fight evil because of it. You *can't* get a better origin than that."

A recent addition to this simple, primal origin is Batman's uncertainty as to whether Joe Chill killed his parents. "We're not saying he isn't the killer, but we're not saying he is either," the writer relates. "That wasn't my decision; I'm taking orders from Denny. He thought it was a mistake to ever give the killer a name and a bigger mistake to do a story where Batman actually caught Joe Chill.

"My contribution was, 'Why don't we play it like he *might* have caught the guy who killed his parents or he might *not* have; he would never know and we'll never know.' Denny said, 'That's fine.' For old-time readers who want to keep thinking the killer is Joe Chill, they can, and for newer readers, we're *not* going to give him a name, he'll just be a faceless killer."

Of course, some readers may think this means the killer is the Joker, as revealed in the 1989 Tim Burton film. "We're doing some interesting things with the Joker," he laughs, "but I can probably say that's *not* planned to be one of them."

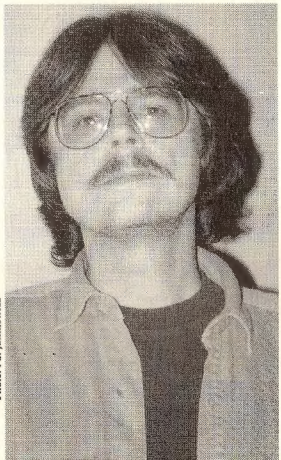


Photo: Pat Jankiewicz

Another change is Batman's costume—he's now wearing a single-color unitard. No more blue underoos. "I said, 'After "Knightfall," this guy has been through a lot; he has never been beaten before and then his *back* was broken, for God's sake! He made a big mistake having this Azrael guy take over and he lost his love, so it must have changed him.' I thought the new costume would show he has been changed, and that's how I'm writing it. The way Kelley Jones draws Batman, it doesn't matter if the costume changed, he draws him darker anyway."

One of Moench's strongest contributions to Gotham City is big, gruff, Bat-hating cop Harvey Bullock. "I based Bullock on Ralph Bakshi," the writer confides. "I was working with Ralph at the time and to me, Ralph was a larger-than-life guy from Brooklyn, a big, burly bull in a china shop—kinda sloppy and rough around the edges. I magnified these traits for Bullock. That's who Bullock is. When I worked with Ralph on *Mighty Mouse*, I told him, 'Hey, Bullock is you!' He said, 'Yeah, yeah, now shut the hell up and work.' " Moench laughs.

Was he happy with Bullock being a regular on *Batman: The Animated Series*? "I shouldn't say this, but I *haven't* seen the series," Moench sheepishly admits. "I know Bullock's a major character on it because they send me money. My kid watches it, so when I'm coming through to get a cup of coffee, I'll catch a minute of it. Bullock's voice [by Robert Constanzo] wasn't what I imagined. They asked me to write for *Batman: The Animated Series*, but I didn't have the time.

"There are a lot of Gotham cops in the comic now, but when I created Bullock, it was just Gordon. We needed a rough-around-the-edges cop who was not the pure, comic-book noble who does no wrong."

Of all his Bat-foes, the writer is partial to one in particular. "Black Mask. I like him because I did a really detailed origin for him. Most of the other villains I did I brought on stage real quick and had

**Imagination and discipline are the keys to comic-book writing success according to Moench. "If you combine those two in the right way, you've got it made."**

Art: Paul Gulacy/Terry Austin

**"In a sense, she's Batman without Batman's scruples," Moench says of the Huntress, a favorite supporting player.**

them get captured, but with Black Mask, I set out to do a really classic origin story. When Denny said recently, 'We need a gang boss, like Gotham's Al Capone. Doug, can you come up with something?' I said, 'I already did; I have this guy, Black Mask, a gang boss who runs the False Face Society of Gotham. They all wear masks; it's a visual thing.' Denny said, 'Great! Bring him back and don't kill him!' Readers had not seen him in 10 years, so it was fun to bring him back!"

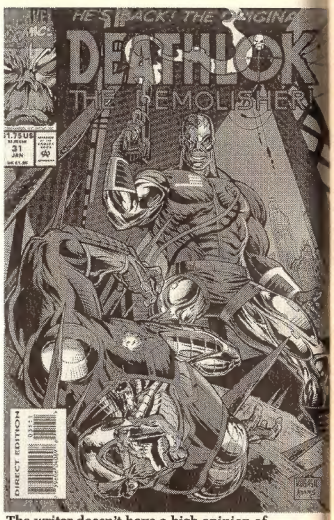
The writer enjoys working the Batman cast into horror movie scenarios. "Kelley and I both like the old Hammer Films stuff, Kelley even more than me," he admits. "Nobody loves 'em more than Kelley! When we had Batman meet Dracula, it was such a natural idea—the two bat guys, a vampire bat and Batman, what more could you want?

"I really liked *Bloodstorm*, where Batman is a vampire. I wanted to literally put Batman through Hell. To me, it wasn't Batman against the Joker and the vampires, it was Batman against himself. He tries to fight the inevitability of being a vampire and taking blood. He knows that as soon as he succumbs, he must sacrifice himself. He'll tell Alfred, 'Drive that stake through my heart!' That was the real conflict. Kelley and I had a great time with the Joker and the vampires. I also liked what we did with Catwoman: bitten by a werewolf, she turns into a werecat!"

Speaking of horror, "Kelley and I are going to do a Batman mini-series called *Haunted Gotham*, where the supernatural exists in Gotham. It's an Elseworlds book; there are ghosts, vampires, ghouls and demons—everything infests Gotham. The city itself is haunted by evil. They won't let horror in the monthly book because they're trying to keep it realistic."

Moench enjoyed playing referee for *Batman vs. Predator II*. "That was fun, a lot of action and I got to put Huntress in it. Both companies [Dark Horse and DC] had to approve everything. When Predator first arrived, he threw his spear at a deer and ate it. I wanted him to make a dramatic entrance holding the deer, but they said, 'No, it has never been shown that he *eats* animals.' So now he just scares the deer away.

"Batman was more fun to write because Predator can't say anything. He can only mimic human speech without knowing what he's mimicking. With Predator, you're limited to whatever has been established in the two movies. He's very primal, but you can't get into complexities with him, you can only hint at them."




**The writer doesn't have a high opinion of the revamped Deathlok: "I can't stand it. I think it's terrible."**

Moench began writing for comics in the late '60s. "My friend Don Glut—who later went on to write books about dinosaurs—sold stories to Warren, the black-and-white comic company, for *Creepy*, *Eerie* and *Vampirella*. I decided if he could do it, I could too, so I wrote five stories in a row, sent them off and forgot all about them. A check showed up a few months later, so I decided to try some more.

"Then, Roy Thomas called. He had read my Warren stories and asked me to come to New York and work for Marvel. I did and spent about 10 years at Marvel. I've been at DC for about 12 to 14 years now. I love it."

The writer has also delved into screenwriting for Hollywood. "I wrote the screenplay for *Red Sonja*, which was rewritten by nine other writers. The Writers Guild offered me a chance to get credit, but I looked at it and said, 'No, I don't want my name on this!' "

Moench was also story editor/head writer on *The New Adventures of Mighty Mouse*. "It was me and John Kricfalusi, who later created *Ren & Stimpy*. John came up with 'Bat Bat' [the show's Batman parody]. I'm not sure I would have thought about doing that character until John said, 'Come on; they won't sue!' He talked us into doing it. DC didn't sue. In fact, they enjoyed seeing it!

"I liked John's designs for Mighty Mouse; he's a genius. We tried to make it funny instead of the adventurous

Art: Kelley Jones/John Beatty

Art: Kevin Eichelt/Greg Adams Deathlok: Trademark & Copyright 1994 Marvel Entertainment Group

**"Readers hadn't seen him in 10 years, so it was fun to bring him back!" enthuses Moench, who created Black Mask, head of the False Face Society.**

opera it used to be. Those old ones were great, but our budget was too low for scoring. If you can't score it, you can't have him sing. All we could do was, 'Here I come to save the day!' because that existed. In the old ones, he would sing through the *whole* cartoon.

"We had no budget for that, so we had to make him funny. I quit after I had a fight with Bakshi, who was a good friend up until that point. I also had my full comic book workload, so it was 16 hours of work a day and I was getting two hours of sleep a night."

Moench is also responsible for the creation of several fan-favorite characters at Marvel, including Deathlok.

"I co-created Deathlok the Demolisher," he explains. "Artist Rich Buckler had the initial idea of doing a cyborg character and came to me with it. We got together, talked about it and I came up with the name.

"Rich had the concept, and the layouts he was doing were really nice and deserved an unusual writing style to match, so I did this triple narration—first-person human, real slangy; then computer, in first person, and then this weird stream of consciousness which was supposed to represent the human and the computer sort of meshing and rubbing against each other."

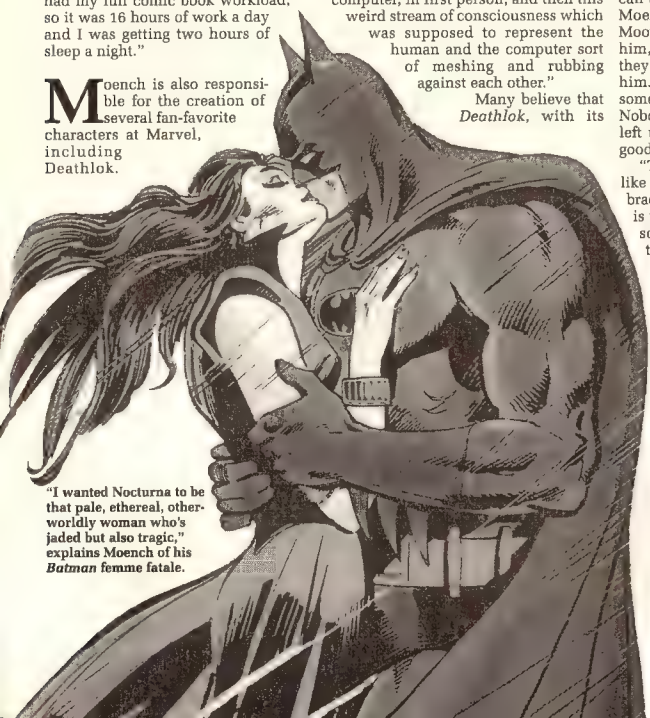
Many believe that *Deathlok*, with its cyborgs and post-nuclear, machine-run future Earth, influenced both the *RoboCop* and *Terminator* films. "Yeah, maybe," the writer muses. "There is a scene in the first *RoboCop* where a character says, 'And now gentlemen, I will present something to you which until now has only been seen in comic books,' and then RoboCop comes out. There's also a scene right out of the original *Deathlok* comics [he first appeared in *Astonishing Tales* in the '70s] where Deathlok goes back to see his wife but now he has been turned into a machine, so it's a big, tragic scene.

"I didn't realize Deathlok was so unique; I think it was ahead of its time. It's only in retrospect that people remember it and are so obsessed with it. When we were doing them, there were no movies like that. Now, it seems like all the big movies are like the comics we were doing in the early '70s. They're 20 years behind!"

Moench admits that he is amazed at Marvel's revamping of Deathlok for the '90s—as a politically correct pacifist. "I can't stand it. I think it's terrible," Moench remarks. "They also ruined Moon Knight; they did a terrible job on him, too. I created the character and they drove it into the ground and killed him. Part of it is because they had someone other than the creator write it. Nobody who wrote Moon Knight after I left understood the character or did a good job; it's as simple as that.

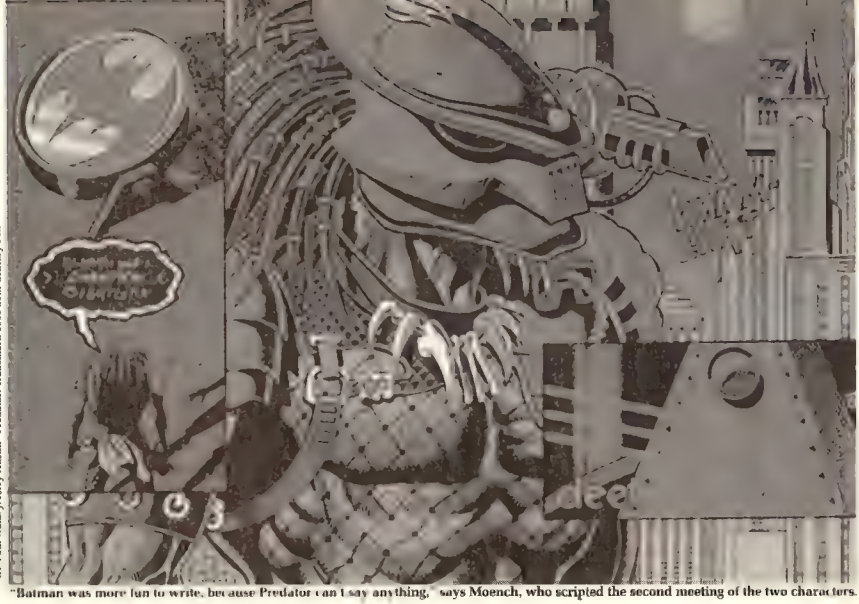
"They made a lot of stupid moves, like giving him super powers and gold bracelets. The essence of Moon Knight is the night is black, the moon silver, so he had a silver and black costume. You don't stick gold on that—it has nothing to do with the night!

"The new Moon Knight is like someone killed my baby—I can't stand what they did to him. When you create a character, you feel a paternal interest, but of course you created it for Marvel Comics, so they can do *whatever* they want to it. You're horrified to see they might do a really lousy job."



**"I wanted Nocturna to be that pale, ethereal, otherworldly woman who's jaded but also tragic," explains Moench of his *Batman* femme fatale.**

Moench also brought Godzilla to comics long before the current Dark Horse efforts. "Marvel said they were gonna do Godzilla, would I have any interest in writing it? I said, 'Sure, what the heck?' I told Stan, 'I think the typical Marvel reader is 14 and they think Godzilla is hokey kids' stuff. Six- to-12-year-olds love Godzilla, so



Art: Paul Gulacy/Terry Austin Predator Trademark 1993 20th Century Fox

"Batman was more fun to write, because Predator can't say anything," says Moench, who scripted the second meeting of the two characters.

why don't we aim for that age group?' Every other title was aimed at the 14-year-old. Stan said, 'Great idea, Doug. Go to it!' Godzilla is cool now.

Art: Kelley Jones Batman & Related Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1003, 1993, 1995

"I love working with Kelley. We're gonna set the world on fire," raves Moench of his collaboration with artist Kelley Jones.

"We tried not to get into the anguish and torment of the other Marvel books and give it a sense of fun and excitement. Older readers actually loved it. Writers and artists tell me, 'When I got my batch of Marvel Comics, *Godzilla* was the first one I would read!'

"Toho licensed us Godzilla and Godzilla only, so we couldn't touch Ghidorah or other creatures from Godzilla movies. My son Derek is 12 and is obsessed with Godzilla. Because Godzilla can't talk, I brought in Dum Dum Dugan and a Godzilla-hunting task force. I had to fill it up with characters because Godzilla is just a force of nature.

"We had Godzilla come to America from up in Alaska [where he trashes the fabled pipeline] and had him work his way down to Seattle and then Las Vegas, going slowly across country until he got to New York. Godzilla had never been anywhere but Japan, so we thought one way to make it appealing to American readers is that Godzilla is in America: He's not stomping Tokyo anymore, he's smashing Chicago!"

Moench has a great deal of work on the horizon, including his *Big Book of Conspiracies*. "It's for DC's Big Book series, after *Urban Legends*, *Weirdos*, *Oddities* and *Death*. It covers all conspiracies, from the JFK and Martin Luther King assassinations to wacky ones like the government conspiracy to hide the truth about flying saucers, the Masons, the Knights Templar, Watergate, Iran-Contra and the fact that the CIA smuggled Nazis out of Europe after World War II. There are bizarre things from every area of conspiracy you can think of. We tie them all into one big master conspiracy, because I'm a big conspiracy buff," he admits.

"I also have a four-part book from Marvel called *Coldblood*, after a character I created. He's a cyborg, hence the name; he's cold-blooded. He *was* Deathlok. Marvel asked me to redo Deathlok for the '90s. I did and they said, 'We changed our mind, we're gonna bring Deathlok back the way he was,' which they didn't really do. They said, 'We like what you did so much, come up with a new name and we'll do that too.' I came up with the name Coldblood and people say, 'Gee, sounds like Deathlok,' and I have to explain! He looks different."

Moench believes the secret of being a good comic-book writer involves imagination and discipline. "If you combine those two in the right way, you've got it made," he reveals. "It only dawned on my son gradually that I write comics. I've been doing it since before he was born, but other kids started coming up to him saying, 'Is it true that your dad writes comics?' He said, 'I guess they think Dad's a big deal!' but he doesn't," Doug Moench laughs. "Dad's not as impressive as Godzilla!"

# COMICS scene

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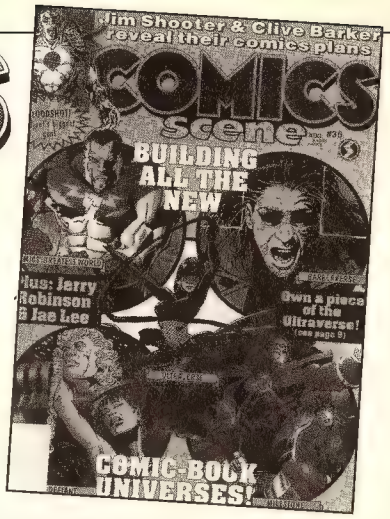
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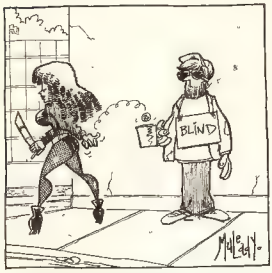
COMICS SCENE COMICS SCENE COMICS SCENE

*Girl* and seeing some "behind the scenes" stuff, I decided to see it. The idea was intriguing: a woman in a tank, mutant kangaroos and a world where water was power. Nothing new, but worth a look. I was able to pick up some of the original *Tank Girl* comics on the film's opening weekend. Giddy, I wanted to be first in line. Not only was I first in line, I was the first one in the theater. Not only that, but I was one of *four* people in the theater (and the only one laughing, I might add). The movie was out of theaters about 10 days later.



HOW DAREDEVIL EARNS A LIVING DURING ALLERGY SEASON.

Art: Bob Maleady

What happened? I really don't want to pick nits or say something high-falutin' like, "*Tank Girl* just doesn't have a big enough following for it to be popular with the general public," or "Something got lost in the translation from page to screen." There's nothing wrong with the movie, really, if you look at it as a sort of softened, Americanized origin of Tank Girl (who herself is Australian, in a British comic book!).

The comic book itself is like *Bloom County* on peyote, with a jumble of irreverence, intriguing stories and images such as a huge meteor and mutant kangaroos that are faintly echoed in Rachel Talalay's film—for which the convenient plot of a quest and a fight for freedom was probably necessary. The film is pleasingly irreverent, but not to the point of viciousness as the comic sometimes is.

The differences between the comic and the film, however many there are, are more annoyances than problems or faults. I could rattle off any of those differences (for example, the tattoos sported by Jet Girl are actually those of Tank Girl's friend Barney, who didn't appear in the film!) but that would probably make for tedious reading, so I won't, as much as I would like it.

What I will say is that I like this movie. I like the comic book even more, but I like the movie. Sure, I was reminded of any number of films with slightly similar plots, but the movie was fun. I was pleasantly reminded of the Adam West *Batman*, due to the use of comic book art for transitions between scenes (and, wouldn't you know it, a climactic fight scene?). Lori Petty was fun to watch as Tank Girl ("Big Ears" to her friends in the comic). Who is this Naomi Watts? This lovely Australian was an intriguing delight as Jet Girl. Malcolm McDowell's Kesslee is the nastiest villain to come along since Darth Vader and Evil from *Time Bandits*. The Rippers were fun, but I wish we could have found out more about them, as well as the briefly seen Sub Girl. The almost bizarre animation was unexpected and delightful. The music was just right. Costumes, makeup and vehicle designs were nifty (along with Kesslee's cybernetics and "water saving" devices).

The movie is, as Tank Girl might say, a nice one. But ultimately, I would have liked more background story. There should have been more to the Department of Water and Power than just Kesslee and his shock troopers doing horrific things to people. And, well, the ending was not one I was expecting, and did not much care for it. I was hoping to see Tank girl wearing a "*tres* colorful umbrella hat" and her reason why, but instead there was something animated and anticlimactic.

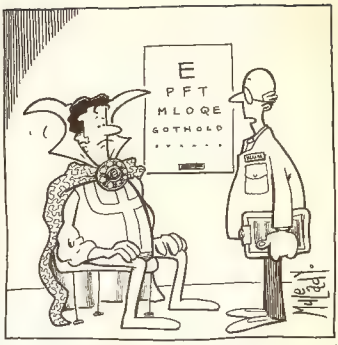
Anyway, *Tank Girl* was a fun film. No serious message (except maybe "lighten up!"), just some action, adventure, irreverence and even cartoons. If I could, I would see it again.

Duncan Shea
Dumfries, VA

...I totally agree with Tina Baffo's addendum to Lee Solomon's "DC on the WB" idea (by the way—I just love the idea of Teri Weigal as Wonder Woman! That is such inspired and quirky casting! I truly hope she gets a chance at the role!). To see a *Justice League* telemovie during sweeps would be incredible! The only thing I disagree with is her choice of *Green Lantern-Green Arrow* for the proposed Friday night slot instead of *Batman*. It would be too hard and expensive to do really good Power Ring FX, and the concept of all those trick arrows in live action just seems campy. Besides, we need more women heroes on TV, so I vote for a solo *Black Canary* series for Friday nights. I certainly hope that WB executives will consider this idea, because the line-up they have now is junk. Not only is it all uninspired, unwatchable and absolutely unredeemable, but they are all rip-offs of other shows. So, why not give these DC superheroes a chance? You might even get better ratings than UPN!

And finally, in response to Fritz Peerenboom, while I agree with his concept of Billy and Cap's separate personalities/characters, I do feel that *Power of Shazam* is one of the best comics being published today, a return to good storytelling over a collection of pinups. I encourage everyone to try this title. Also, if DC wishes to change artists on it, *please* get Alan Weiss (*Shazam*, the old series #34).

L. Armstrong
Mt. Clemens, MI



"IT SEEMS THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF AGAMOTTO IS NEARSIGHTED."

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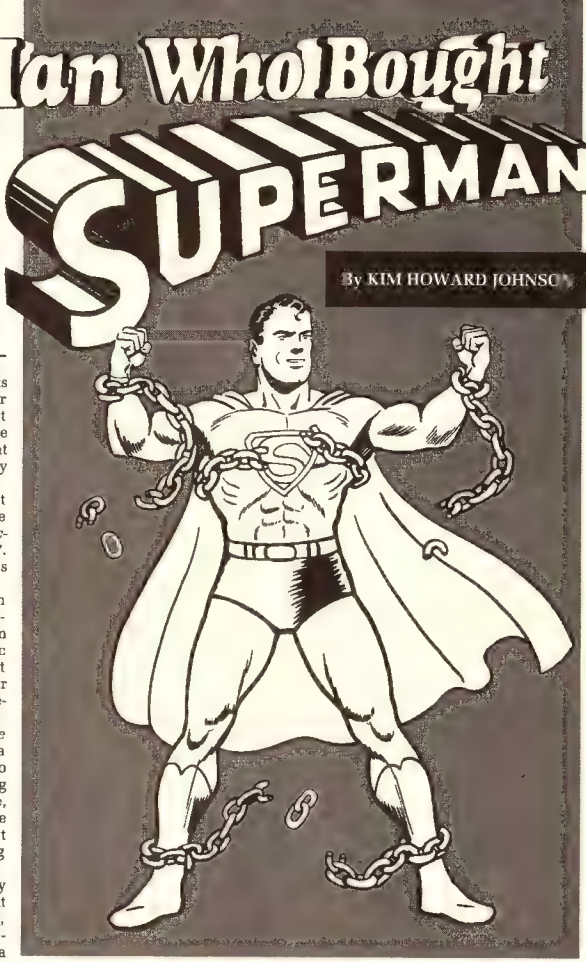
# The Man Who Bought SUPERMAN

***At the dawn of comics, editor Vincent Sullivan brought forth a Man of Steel & a Dark Knight.***

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON



The comic book field has had its share of talented editors over the decades, but the most important of them all just may be Vincent Sullivan. In fact, comics might not exist as we know them today without his contributions.

A short list of the most important comics ever published would include several books edited by Sullivan: *Action Comics* #1. *Detective Comics* #27. *Superman* #1. *Batman* #1. And 1939's *New York World's Fair Comics.*

Very few comics veterans can claim they've been around *longer* than Superman and Batman, but Sullivan can take credit for *publishing* their historic first appearances. And that doesn't take into account his many other valuable contributions as a comics creator.

"I drew the cover for *Detective Comics* #1," recalls Sullivan. "It's a picture of Fu Manchu, if you want to call him that. I was editing and doing some cartoons and whatnot at the time, and this was the first serious picture that I drew for the books—it wasn't the only one, but I started out doing interior cartoons and comic pictures."

Sullivan is still alive and well today at age 83, and while he has been absent from the comics field for many years, he's happy to reminisce about the infancy of the industry in the 1930s, a time in which he worked as both as an editor and an artist.

DC Comics, known as National Allied Publications when it was founded by Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson in 1935, made history by publishing the tabloid-sized *New Fun* #1 (which became *More Fun* the following year), the first comic book to consist of entirely *new* material. *New Comics* began in 1936.

Sullivan admits that he has forgotten just how he came to work for Wheeler-Nicholson, but says he always wanted to be a newspaper cartoonist. "I was always interested in cartoons and comics and things of that nature, and was forever trying to sell my various comic strips, which were not accepted. So, if you want to put it that way," he says, "I had been in the cartoon business for some time.

"Earlier, I was a copy boy for the *New York Daily News*. I was interested in meeting the cartoonists. I did meet the creator of *Smitty*, and became friendly with him. From that point on, I became most interested in getting into the comic strip business myself, but I never succeeded. However, I eventually became a part-time sports cartoonist for the *Daily News*. The *Daily News* was looking for a sports cartoonist for their sports section, and I was one of the three who tried out for it. I didn't get the job," he laughs. "I wasn't experienced enough as a kid to handle the various sporting activities at that time. But, I did have quite a few cartoons published in the *Daily News*."

Sullivan never had art lessons when he was young. "I always thought of myself as a cartoonist, rather than an artist. I never had any formal training, I just picked it up.

"I haven't the faintest idea how I ended up meeting Nicholson. I don't know whether there was an ad in the paper or what. He may have been look-

ing for editors, or somebody interested in cartoons, but I just draw a complete blank in my memory," he says.

"At that time, there were no real comic books, except for reprints like *Famous Funnies. More Fun* was the first original comic book. It was larger than the others, what they used to call 'bastard-sized,' somewhere between the size that exists today and the tabloid-sized newspaper."

At that early stage in their development, there was no stigma to comics. "They were something new—it was just an avenue for me to get my work printed and, at the same time, work as an editor," Sullivan says. "Prior to this, I had been trying to sell my cartoon strips. One of the strips I did was for Jimmy Durante. I sold it to the Bell Newspaper Syndicate. Jimmy and I had contracted to do it, but it never happened, because he was asking too much money for releasing it—the syndicate couldn't sell enough papers to guarantee him the figure that he wanted. This was all prior to working at National." Sullivan also made a stab at a strip with entertainer Rudy Vallee. It didn't sell either.

When Sullivan agreed to work for Wheeler-Nicholson and Whitney Ellsworth, he found himself serving as an editor as well as an artist during that historic era. "Nicholson's idea was to start a comic book with original art," he says. "We were all kids at that time. Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster were 17 or 18 when they came up to my office at Detective Comics, as it became known."

After they had begun publishing *New Comics, More Fun Comics* and *Detective Comics*, the company experienced a change in ownership. "Wheeler-Nicholson was the financial man, but the company ran into money problems," Sullivan says. "The books were being distributed by the Independent News Company, which was owned by Harry Donenfeld and Jack Liebowitz. They had a line of their own pulp magazines that they were distributing. At the same time, Nicholson apparently made a deal with them to take on the comics that we were producing. Eventually, they were advancing him money to keep things going. This was not an uncommon practice, and the distributor would oftentimes put money into a publisher's business to keep it going or strengthen it. But it got to the point where they kept putting more and more in and getting nothing out of it; so finally they took over the company. They kept the Detective Comics name, and I simply moved a few blocks north on Lexington Avenue to their offices."

Those were the offices where Siegel and Shuster came to try and sell their proposed *Superman* feature. "These two fellows, Siegel and Shuster, started *Superman* around 1935 or '36," Sullivan says. "They wanted to sell it to newspaper syndicates, not as comic books, which weren't too well-established at that time. They were trying to sell this thing as a comic strip to the various newspaper syndicates, and to the best of my knowledge, they approached almost every syndicate in the country. They came out of Cleveland, but most of the syndicates were in New York City. They tried to connect with the syndicates, but no one was interested.

**"A fella with the strength to lift automobiles was very unusual. I thought it would be a nice feature for the public," relates Sullivan.**

Design & Layout: Freddy Collado

"It finally got into the hands of the ast one, the McClure Newspaper Syndicate. Siegel presented the thing to McClure, and there was a fellow there at that time by the name of Charlie Gaines, father of Bill Gaines of *Mad* magazine. Charlie knew that National Periodical Publications, which became Detective Comics later on, was looking

No. 27
MAY, 1939
Detective
COMICS
10¢
STARTING THIS ISSUE AND THEREAFTER IN EACH ISSUE OF DUE ADVENTURES OF
THE BATMAN
Superman, Batman & Related Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1995 DC Comics, Inc.

**"Like Superman, it looked different—it *was* different," notes Sullivan of Bob Kane's first Batman story, which he bought for *Detective Comics*.**

for material to put in this new magazine, *Action Comics*. So, they sent the strips off to me.

"Jerry and Joe came up to see me at my office anyway, and the strips looked good to me—they looked like something a little different, and I decided to use them in *Action Comics*. But, we had to re-arrange the panels from the newspaper-sized comic strips to a comic book page, which meant adding additional panels, I believe. So, that's how it first started in *Action*."

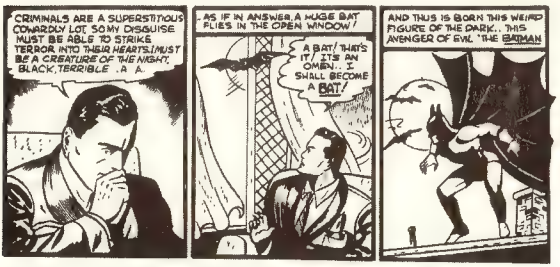
Superman appealed to Sullivan because the character was unique. "It was something different. It just appealed to me, that's all," he says. "A fella with the strength to lift automobiles and things of that nature, I thought, was very unusual. I thought it would be a nice feature for the public."

Although Superman was an immediate hit on newsstands, it took slightly longer for Sullivan to learn of the character's success. "I would say it took five or six months," he notes. "When we put a book out, it took us two or three months to get returns, so we really *didn't* know what was going to happen. We had the second or third issue of *Action Comics*—I don't know what was on the cover of those, but after the fourth issue, we realized that the thing was catching on and sold very well. We increased the print runs and started to put Superman on *Action*'s covers."

In those days long before comics fandom (and almost before comics themselves!), Sullivan says they got very few letters from readers. "There wasn't very much feedback," he recalls. "I had no part of the actual sales and the money involved—that was handled by Donenfeld and Liebowitz. I wasn't made privy to any details as far as money was concerned—all I know is that the thing was selling very well, probably far better than I thought it was. They never told me!"

*Action Comics* #1 changed comics forever, and virtually created an entire new industry, but Sullivan says it didn't really have a discernible effect on the employees. "We just continued doing the same things," he says. "We knew that this Superman character was selling very well, but we didn't necessarily convert all the features to superheroes at that stage. We just continued the magazines that we had before. *New Comics* had the same features, we didn't change those. I don't recall really what we did, but there was nothing unusual taking place editorially."

Sullivan says the success of the Man of Steel didn't necessarily make them more receptive to superheroes. "I was still looking for adventure-type characters like the Crimson Avenger, things of that nature," he says. "I don't think we started another superhero at all until Batman came along."


CRIMINALS ARE A SUPERSTITIOUS COWARDLY LOT. SO MY DISGUISE MUST BE ABLE TO STRIKE TERROR INTO THEIR HEARTS. I MUST BE A CREATURE OF THE NIGHT, BLACK, TERRIBLE. A BAT!
AS IF IN ANSWER, A HUGE BAT FLIES IN THE OPEN WINDOW!
A BAT! THAT'S IT! IT'S AN OMEN. I SHALL BECOME A BAT!
AND THUS IS BORN THIS WEIRD FIGURE OF THE DARK. THIS AVENGER OF EVIL. THE BATMAN

**With these panels, a phenomenon was born, and 50 years later, the public's interest in Batman comics and movies is undiminished.**

Sullivan was also present when the Dark Knight was born, though most of his memories are second-hand. "There was an article on Bob Kane in *People* magazine in 1989, when the first movie came out," he says. "He mentioned my name, of course, which was very nice, and he said he came in to see me one Friday. Bob was astounded to hear that these two fellows, Siegel and Shuster, were making so much money with *Superman*. Of course, there was no way I

could confirm this either, because I was never made privy to any financial dealings. He said, 'I think I can do something as good,' and I said, 'Well, go home and see if you can!' Bob said he came back the following Monday or Tuesday and had the Batman pages that he had created, and that's how that started."

Sullivan liked the first Batman sketches that Kane brought to him. "Like Superman, it looked different—it *was* different," he says. "I said I would buy it, and eventually, it caught on!"

The editor was also in charge of *New York World's Fair Comics* #1 in 1939, a 100-page comic with cardboard covers which introduced the Golden Age Sandman. Sullivan even drew the issue's cover.

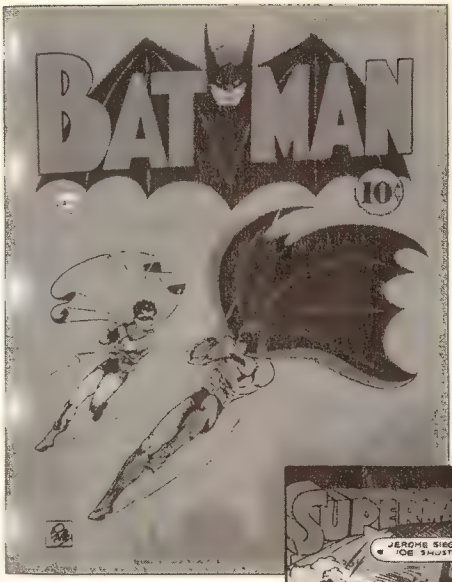
"We were selling *World's Fair Comics* for 25 cents with a semi-hard cover. I knew the people who were doing the World's Fair in New York City, and I knew some of the officials over there, so I went over and obtained the license to use the title, *World's Fair Comics*, for myself. Then, I went to Liebowitz and Donenfeld and made an arrangement to have them finance and distribute the book. We made a deal as to cutting up whatever the profits would be. I think we used some of the material I had been buying for *Action Comics* and whatever other books were in existence. I used some of those pages from the inventory that I had on hand. That's how come Superman and some of the characters like Zatarra the Magician were in there."

Sullivan reveals that he created Zatarra the Magician, who debuted in *Action* #1 and became a semi-regular DC supporting character (even fathering Zatanna, star of a recent miniseries). "I created him and Fred Guardineer did the art," he explains. "My inspiration was simply Mandrake the Magician. He even wore a high hat! The drawings were certainly different, but it was the same sort of basic concept, with a magician doing a lot of crazy things."

When he's informed that Zatarra was used by DC on occasion through the 1980s, Sullivan chuckles. "Really? I created a lot of the characters in these books," he says modestly. "I would have to see one of the books to determine which ones I created—I haven't a concept of the individual characters."

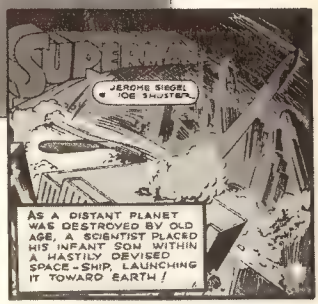
Sullivan says his editorial duties at the time he was working with Siegel and Shuster were rather loosely defined. "Anything I had to do, I did," he says. "I don't think I even used to read the scripts. Joe used to bring in the completed pages and possibly made some corrections if necessary, but generally, I accepted what they had. So, there wasn't much editing, as far as editorial work was concerned. There was nothing exceptional to what I did.

All Batman Art: Bob Kane




By 1940, Batman had his own book as well as his own sidekick, and the Golden Age of superheroes was well on its way.

**"The thing was making money and it was not showing up as far as I was concerned, or as far as Siegel and Shuster were concerned," Sullivan says of the *Superman* profits.**


SUPERMAN
JEROME SIEGEL
JOE SHUSTER
AS A DISTANT PLANET WAS DESTROYED BY OLD AGE, A SCIENTIST PLACED HIS INFANT SON WITHIN A HASTILY DEVISED SPACE-SHIP, LAUNCHING IT TOWARD EARTH!

Art: Jerome Siegel & Joe Shuster

As editor, I was also dealing with the engravers, the printers and the mechanical side of the business, too, because nobody else was familiar with that."

*Superman* was one of the first characters to appear in an original comic book solely devoted to that character (though the first issues carried reprints from *Action Comics*), but Sullivan says no one at DC was worried. "I would say that it wasn't a hard decision to make," he explains, "because by that time, we knew that the character was selling *Action Comics*. So, the decision was made to bring his own book out."

The Man of Steel was already being licensed by the time *Superman* #1 appeared. "I think the radio show had started, but it didn't affect what we were doing," Sullivan says. "I wasn't part of these other dealings that took place up there at the Detective Comics office. That was one of the reasons I finally left the company. I was not satisfied at all with the way things were being handled, money-wise, and decisions that were being made. I was creatively frustrated in a way, but moreso it was the finances. I knew the thing was making money and it wasn't showing up as far as I was concerned, or as far as Siegel and Shuster were concerned."

Sullivan decided to leave DC in early 1940 and began to publish comics on his own. "I started my own company, which was very successful," he says. "I originally had been approached by the McNaught Newspaper Syndicate, and Frank Markey, who had his own newspaper syndicate. Charlie McAdam, the president of McNaught, and Markey were good friends. They came to me and proposed setting up a comic book business, and would I handle the thing for them?

"Well, I was having my serious doubts about the fellows who ran Detective Comics, so I gave it some thought and decided to leave, as a result of the stories and the things that were happening anyway. It goes back to the Siegel and Shuster thing—they were complaining themselves about not participating in the money. At one time, Jerry mentioned to me that they [National] wanted them to sign a contract. I said, 'Jerry, you had better consult an attorney from the sound of that.' I told him my older brother was

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**Originally an aspiring artist, Sullivan went to work for National Allied Publications in the '30s and became editor of *Detective Comics*.**

an attorney and would be very glad to help him out. But, they didn't take the offer. It was too bad. But, you have to understand the atmosphere that existed at that time at Detective Comics—it was unpleasant, really.

"I started the Columbia Comic Corporation with the newspaper syndicate. We published *Big Shot Comics*, mostly reprints of characters and features that both syndicates had—*Joe Palooka*, *Dixie Dugan*, *Mickey Finn*, *The Bungles*, all of those. I interspersed the features with original stories in *Big Shot*. I had *Skyman*, a character I created and still have the copyright on. I was in the comic business for quite some time. I had quite a number of books, the best of which was *Straight Arrow*. I had made arrangements with the National Biscuit Company—*Straight Arrow* was a radio show on the Mutual Broadcasting System. Television hadn't come into its own yet, so I went out to Nabisco and made a deal with them to produce it as a comic book, and it was quite successful."

Sullivan got out of comics in the 1950s, when *Seduction of the Innocent* came out during the McCarthy era and ignited the Senate witch hunts in the comic book industry. "It was about the time they were getting after the comics about the violence, and the Comics Code was being handled by some ex-judge here in New York City," Sullivan says. "It was a ridiculous thing, about the kids being affected by the violence and all that. It affected comics sales. Plus, there was the introduction of television—I blame television for the demise of most of the books at that time. It certainly affected me, anyway! I had quite a number of Western books—*Tim Holt*, *Durango Kid*. The books were losing money! We had quite a few books out, and we were starting to lose $10-$15,000 a book. I couldn't keep it up, so I decided to close up business and quit. Some companies were strong enough, or they published books other than comics—movie books and things of that nature—to sustain them. All of my funds were in the comics business, so I was forced to quit. *Superman* and *Batman* kept going—I can't say their sales didn't decrease, but they managed to hang on. My company just deteriorated and I closed shop."

Retired today after working in real estate, mergers and acquisitions, Sullivan still has some interest in comics and the publishing business. "I miss it," he confesses. "As a matter of fact, I'm still working on an idea, not for comics, but a grown-up type of publication."

Sullivan didn't realize the explosive growth the comics field has undergone in recent years. "I was not familiar at all with it," he says. "I haven't been in touch for many years until recently. The DC people called me and came out to interview me one day, and brought me quite a few books that they're doing now. That's the first contact I've had with the field since I left years ago."

The editor says he isn't too impressed with what he has seen of current titles. "I *don't* like the comics today," he says. "They just don't appeal to me, and I can't see them appealing to kids. Of course, when I was in the business, my audience was boys and girls, particularly boys, around 11, 12, 13 years old. These features that they're running now certainly aren't juvenile."

Even though he had very little contact with comics through the years, Sullivan was certainly aware of the big-budget *Superman* and *Batman* films. "I had mixed feelings," he admits. "I didn't care for the first *Batman* picture, I didn't like it at all. It was too Gothic, I don't think it appealed to the kids. I've seen one of the *Superman* movies, and it was better than *Batman*. It was more like the character than Batman is in the pictures. But then, I'm not in a position to critique the various things that came out."

Still, one of comics' oldest veterans isn't afraid to look into his crystal ball (perhaps borrowed from Zatarra?) and make a few predictions for the comics field. "The industry certainly has grown tremendously, and where it will go from here, I don't know," he says. "I think we're seeing an overabundance of these superheroes. It annoys me to see all these characters—I can't understand how readers can digest it all. So many superheroes! That will change—they'll swing over to something else. You can eat just so much vanilla ice cream and then you get sick of it!"

Vincent Sullivan admits he has a certain sense of pride about his contributions to Superman, Batman and the industry they helped to create. "It's nice to feel that these things which are so tremendously popular today were things that I had a hand in creating!"

# Amazonian Legends

**Thanks to John Byrne, Wonder Woman's ready to take her place atop the DC pantheon.**

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON

*Wonder Woman* has a new writer/artist in John Byrne, and a new attitude: Don't mess with her! Byrne, who has written or drawn virtually every major superhero for both DC and Marvel, agreed to take over *Wonder Woman* because he was asked by the editor.

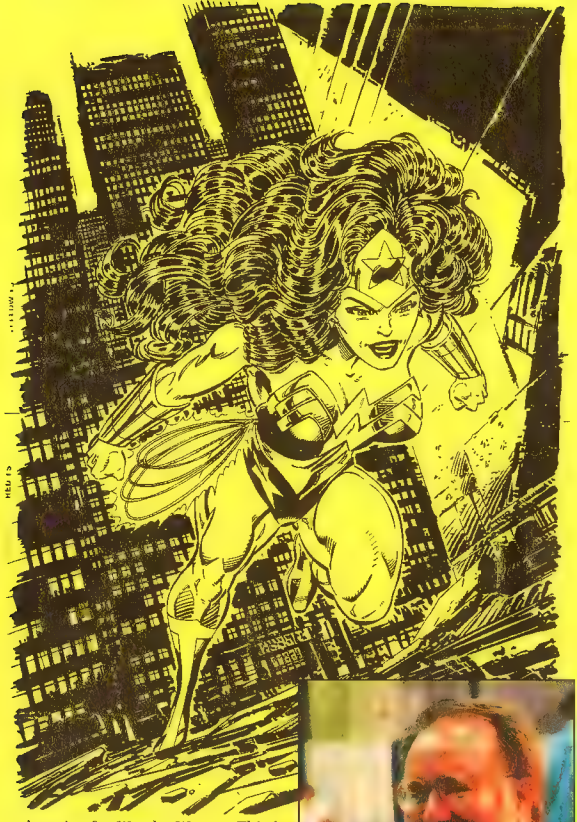
"Paul Kupperberg and I go back a quarter-century or so," says Byrne. "He called me up on January 3rd and asked if I was interested in writing *Wonder Woman*. I said if I was going to write it, I would probably want to draw it, too, and he said that the artist [Mike Deodato Jr.] was leaving, as well!"

The character is the only one of the classic superheroes that Byrne hasn't yet done. "She's the last of the big toys," he says. "I've done Superman, Batman, Spider-Man, the Hulk, the X-Men, the Fantastic Four. As far as DC is concerned, she's the often-forgotten third corner of the triumvirate: Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman. She's one of the ones who made Earth-Two difficult!"

Because Wonder Woman has been around for 55 years, Byrne says it may not always be easy to discover the character's fresh and original aspects. "The challenge is to reach inside the character and find something that nobody has done before. That's the challenge of *any* character. With *Wonder Woman*, since most of the people who've handled her over the years have been rather coy about addressing her as a straightforward superhero, I don't have to dig as deep or reach as far—I just upped the power level to find something I would be able to leave my thumbprints on."

Sales on *Wonder Woman* have rarely been strong throughout the years, and in fact, the series has only been spared from cancellation at several points due to licensing and merchandising concerns. Still, Wonder Woman is only one of three super-heroes (Superman and Batman are the other two) to be published continuously in their own book since the 1940s, and Byrne is committed to raising sales.

"I'm doing *everything* I can in the book to get rid of that automatic prejudice that kicks in when you deal with a female character," Byrne declares. "For 20-odd issues of *She-Hulk*, I was



**Guess who's back? If you said Wonder Woman, you're only partly right. John Byrne has also returned to drawing and writing super-powered women as only he can.**

rehearsing for *Wonder Woman*. This is a character who used to be big and strong and powerful, with no apologies for the fact that she's a woman.

"I even pointed out to Kupperberg that I'm demanding that DC change their stationery! The DC stationery has a stack of superheroes holding up the DC bullet with Wonder Woman on top of the stack. At the bottom is Superman, then it's Captain Marvel on his shoulders, and Batman, and Green Lantern. I said Wonder Woman should be standing on Superman's shoulders, supporting the rest of the tower! She's not the weakest character in the DC Universe, she's the second strongest! But there's an automatic prejudice that kicks in, even with something as simple as the stationery design, where they have to put the girl on the top because she's the weak little female. Not any more! She's stronger than dirt, and second only to Superman! There may be quite a gulf between her and Superman—we don't really know—but nobody else fits into that gulf."

**"When I was a kid, I never read it because it was perceived as a girl's book," reveals Byrne of his new labor of love. "I'm coming at this character almost blind!"**

Byrne believes that Wonder Woman is different from all the other "big toys" that he has played with over the years. "Her powers are different, her attitudes and philosophies are different. Actually, with some of the stuff George Pérez did with his revamp of Paradise Island, now she has only been in Man's World, or Patriarch's World, for a few years," he explains. "I look at the book and I realize that there's a certain naiveté to the character that's really quite charming and fun to play with. But one must also avoid what I call the 'Beverly Hillbillies Syndrome,' where they live in that mansion for nine years and never do figure out what a doorbell is. I don't want to get Wonder Woman trapped by that, but at the same time, there's that strange way that comic book time works. As 20, 25 years go by for us, a few years go by for the characters. You have to find a way to balance that, so the characters don't change or accelerate or grow in a manner that would seem unrealistic if you were to sit down and read the stories all over."

Following the events of the past year which saw the Amazon princess lose her title, Byrne confirms that Diana will remain the real Wonder Woman for the foreseeable future. "The main thing I'm doing as a result of the Artemis storyline is that Diana will be thoroughly pissed off at Hippolyta, and the umbilical to Paradise Island or Hemiscira is pretty well cut. Originally, I had just intended to have it cut somewhere between issues #100 and #101, when I took over, but I cooked up this storyline with Darkseid, where Paradise Island gets completely demolished, to the point where Diana leaves and says, 'Well, I guess that's all behind me.' So, she's off to a new city with a new supporting cast, and won't be running home to Mom every other issue."

Wonder Woman is currently a member of the Justice League, but Byrne plans to connect her more closely with the DC Universe within her own title. "I'm trying to hook her in as much as I can," he says. "I would love to have Superman appear, and I am using the Phantom Stranger and the Demon in my second story arc. I'm bringing in Morgan Le Fay, a recurring villain from Jack Kirby's days. In my own sneaky little way, I'm going to put her into the third or fourth story arc, where she'll fight Doomsday. That ought to hook it into the DC Universe!"

A brand new supporting cast and change in locale will accompany the new writer/artist. "I'm moving her to Gateway City, and introducing a cop who will eventually become a romantic interest—a *male* cop, I hasten to add," Byrne jokes. "I'm bringing in a profes-

sor of antiquities and her daughter through Diana's new job, which is lecturer on antiquities for the Gateway City Museum of Antiquities. I realize there's a pretty strong parallel with the characters that George Pérez installed, and I'm working to avoid that by making my mother character considerably younger. There will also be various people who will drop in, do some stuff and leave."

Byrne's role on *Wonder Woman* is considerably different from his role when he revamped Superman for DC 10 years ago, he notes. "On *Superman*, they kind of handed me a blank slate and said, 'Do whatever you want to do,' " he explains. "On *Wonder Woman*, I'm being much more obedient. In fact, Bill Messner-Loebs had done some branching away from some of the stuff that George did, and I'm actually going to chop off some of those branches, and re-direct things back to what worked when George set it up.

"I guess the biggest single 'no, I don't like that so I'm getting rid of it' change I'm making is that whole thing about the Amazons being the spirits of women who were murdered by men. Well, that goes! They are now women who died before their time—and that's as specific as I'm going to get."

Even though powerful female titles like *Vampirella*, *Shi* and *Lady Death* are "hot" at the moment, Byrne says their success isn't necessarily going to rub off on *Wonder Woman*. "There's *never* a good time to do a book with a strong female character. The audience, being largely male, has always been resistant to strong female characters. They will accept female characters in groups, provided they wear dental floss clothing—even Wonder Woman has been running around in next to nothing—the Wonder-thong, they call it. I don't quite cut it that high on the thigh, but I *am* making her look tougher. I'm keeping the same basic costume, but I'm messing with it a little to make it look tougher, and that's really my *only* concession to some of the sensibilities of modern audiences. Otherwise, I'm just saying, 'Hey kids, this is a strong female—live with it!' "

"There's never a good time to do a book with a strong female character," offers Byrne, who should know since he toiled on 2 odd issues of *She-Hulk*.

All Wonder Woman Art: John Byrne/Trademark and Copyright 1995 DC Comics

IT IS NOT THE FIRST TIME CHAOS HAS BOILED INTO THE FACE OF MORTAL WOMANKIND.
NOR WILL IT BE THE LAST.
HER BOIL ERUPTS WITH FIRE! TOXIC GAS FROM THE DEPTHS! ACID RAIN! AS THE DEVIL CUT TO THE CHASE!
WHAT THE HELL?!
WONDER WOMAN!!

**Wonder Woman is changing under the guiding hand of Byrne. "Her powers are different, her attitudes and philosophies are different."**

Among the inspirations for Byrne's Wonder Woman is Lynda Carter, star of the '70s *Wonder Woman* TV series. "There are a number of people who come together in my head for Wonder Woman," notes Byrne. "Lynda was absolutely perfect in that time and place, one of the most spectacular female superhero bodies walking around for real. But, she's just a little

soft for modern standards—our precepts of what makes a strong woman have changed in the past 20 years. I'm basically playing Diana the same way I played She-Hulk, which is when she's just standing around, she's nice and soft, but when she gets going, the muscles come out!"

Paul called me because he knew I think the same way he does about the characters, and it's not like I have to go to war with the editors. We haven't hit a bump yet, but I'm sure at some point, someone at DC will say, 'Gee, I don't like what Byrne is doing.' "

Byrne notes that his work on his Legends titles is currently on hold. "The market is such a mess right now," he says. "Originally, *Next Men* was going on hiatus for about four months. At the point when the hiatus began, the bottom fell out of the marketplace, and I said, 'Gosh, if I bring it back when I planned, it would just vanish without a ripple,' because everything was so messed up. Part of the reason for doing *Wonder Woman* is to remind people that I'm still alive, to do a high-profile project. One of the harsh lessons of comics is that fans always judge you by the last thing you did, and *Next Men* was a very specific product aimed at a very specific audience. I pinched myself off the mainstream, and in fact, the response I've been getting from some of these fans is delight that I'm getting back to good, old-fashioned, mainstream superheroes."

For many of us, Lynda Carter was our introduction to Wonder Woman—on TV. "Lynda was absolutely perfect in that time and place," says Byrne.

Carter Photo: ABC

Even though three of Byrne's most recent titles—*She-Hulk*, *Babe* and now *Wonder Woman*—have starred strong females, he believes there are actually few similarities to be found between those books. "When I agreed to do *Wonder Woman*, I commented to somebody that in some respects, my whole career, especially as a writer, has been pointing toward *Wonder Woman*," he says. "I've been working my way through increasingly strong women. I started out with Sue Richards of the *Fantastic Four*, whom I juiced up as much as I could without sacrificing her personality. I tried to do the same with the Scarlet Witch, and definitely with She-Hulk, and then there was Heather Hudson of *Alpha Flight*. The question is, when you want to do strong women, where do you end up?"

Although there may be a few familiar elements, Byrne maintains that his work isn't really inspired by any of the previous creative teams on the title. "I'm sure there will be things that will

Byrne has been working on his own creations like *John Byrne's Next Men* and *Babe* for Dark Horse's Legends line in recent years, and *Wonder Woman* marks his return to "sharecropping" for DC, as he jokingly calls it. "It's very strange," he says. "I was anticipating it being much more of a lurch than it has been. Of course, Paul Kupperberg being a friend has helped. He's easygoing and has let me get away with a lot of stuff that perhaps another editor might not. So, it doesn't feel vastly different from doing a creator-owned thing. Plus, of course,

**"I'm not going to be doing any archeology on this book—it starts here!" Byrne boasts. "You can pick up my first issue if you've never read *Wonder Woman* before."**

Design & Layout: Freddy Collado

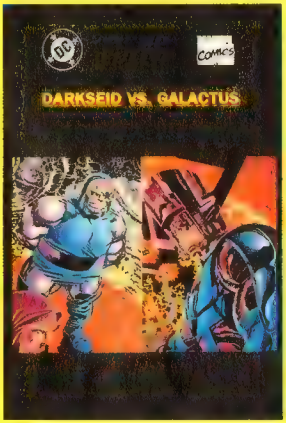
**Byrne relates two of his many changes. "I'm moving [Diana] to Gateway City, and I'm introducing a cop who will eventually become a romantic interest."**

invoke the past for longtime readers, but for the most part, I never followed *Wonder Woman* all that closely. When I was a kid, I never read it because it was perceived as a girl's book. My greatest exposure to the character was in *Justice League* and the Lynda Carter TV series, so I'm building from the ground up. This isn't quite like *Superman* for me, where I had 50 years worth of stuff that I had been exposed to in, and I just sort of cobbled together my favorite parts. I'm really coming at this character almost blind! One of the reasons to get her out of Boston and give her a whole new cast is to give the fans a clean slate, a new beginning. I'm not going to be doing any archeology on this book—it starts *here*! You can pick up my first issue if you've never read *Wonder Woman* before."

The initial story arcs will be rich in action and guest stars, promises Byrne. "The arcs are basically running four to six issues, because those make good trade paperbacks," he admits. "The first arc is Darkseid attacking Paradise Island, because he's still trying to figure out what happened to the Greek gods, having established in *Action* #600 that the Greek gods are actually an off-shoot of the gods of New Genesis and Apokolips. I always thought it would be cool if Jack Kirby created the Greek gods! After that, I do an arc with Morgan Le Fay, and that brings in the Phantom Stranger and the Demon, who will *not* rhyme. The third and fourth arcs will involve a character who's able to resurrect dead folks, which is how Doomsday got into the act. And the other arc reveals that Wonder Woman was in fact a member of the Justice Society. [Editors] Mike Carlin and Archie Goodwin suggested I do it as a separate mini-series—the only problem is that I would have to do it late next year, because I've got my plate full—so I decided to keep it as a story arc to draw further attention to *Wonder Woman*."

Byrne is also keeping busy with a couple of Marvel-DC crossovers, starting with *Darkseid vs. Galactus: The Hunger* (out next month). "Marvel and DC will deny this, but I just got the green light on a Batman-Captain America tale. It's not unlike the *Superman of 1776*, another story that I've had in my head for almost 20 years, and I finally get to squeeze it out. I thought I would never get to do it, because it's set in World War II, and when Earth-Two went away, I thought that was the last chance I would have to do that story. Now, they're doing Elseworlds, and as Denny O'Neil said, this will be the first Elseworlds crossover!"

The writer/artist admits that it's difficult to know where the comics industry is heading after all the recent tumultuous events. "I've been saying to people that when I came into the industry around 1975, everyone was predicting the whole industry would be gone in five years," says Byrne. "Then, along came the direct sales market, which




Crossover Art: John Byrne©Copyright 1995 DC Comics and Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

**One of Byrne's other projects is a Marvel-DC crossover, *Darkseid vs. Galactus: The Hunger*. It's on sale shortly.**

revolutionized the way we approached and sold comics, and saved the whole industry. But in the 20 years since then, the direct sales market has itself become a problem, the very same market that used to support lower-selling books now destroys them as fast as or faster than the newsstand used to. So, perhaps this Marvel-Heroes World/DC-Diamond—whoever else is doing what else—this is obviously the future, and perhaps this is what's going to save us this time, or maybe it just means we're going to accelerate into the void that much quicker. I wouldn't be prepared to even guess at this point."

To get through these uncertain times, John Byrne is concentrating on the work at hand, and admits that *Wonder Woman* is a challenge, but one doesn't worry about it overly much. "I did a strong female character with *She-Hulk*, and tried to sugar-coat it by making it funny. I'm not doing that at all with *Wonder Woman*. She picks up and throws tanks in my first issue, and literally slaughters Darkseid's troops in the second and third issues. Her attitude is 'Don't mess with me!' "

**"The [comic] audience, being largely male, has always been resistant to strong female characters," says the writer/artist. Well fellas, get used to 'em.**

# GOOFY GHOST

## *Joe Alaskey, always a little green duck, goes a-haunting in "Casper."*

By PAT JANKIEWICZ

Lucky Photo: Michael Paris/Copyright 1988 New Line Cinema

**"Being Stinkie is a wonderful feeling," says Joe Alaskey, the voice of Casper's smelly uncle, who has appeared on camera in films like *Lucky Stiff*.**

Kids don't expect the voice of a little green duck to come out of *me*," laughs Joe Alaskey. The actor has a jokey friendliness that reminds one of a favorite high school teacher. While his voice (and occasionally his face) have been part of many productions, he's best known for voicing the animated Plucky Duck on *Tiny Toons Adventures*. As Alaskey sits in his trailer watching a rainstorm pound the Universal Studios backlot, he contemplates his latest role—Stinkie, one of the crazy ghost uncles of *Casper* in Amblin Entertainment's latest production.

"I'm very grateful to have the part of Stinkie, one of the Ghostly Trio," Alaskey says with an almost straight face. "The reason being, I grew up on this stuff. In fact, my Mom saved all my drawings from when I was a kid and one of the *first* things I ever drew was the Ghostly Trio, right out of the comics! Page one of my scrapbook was the Ghostly Trio when I was three, and now, because of this movie, it's on the last page, too!"

The Ghostly Trio is composed of three different ghosts, the sinister

Stretch, Fatso and Alaskey's smelly spook. "Since Stinkie is the 'Larry Fine' of the group, thus being the most nebulous of character, I wanted to define him better, so I added a little Peter Lorre and tried to lay Stinkie right in the center between the scariest of the three and the zaniest. Hopefully, he's a scary Harpo!"

*Casper* is an elaborate live-action adaptation of the classic cartoons and comic books. "I'm having a terrific time on it," the actor declares. "Steven [Spielberg, *Casper*'s executive producer] makes you feel even better because he's so easy to work with. He does come to the set and brings a lot of sunshine, even on a rainy day like this one. He brought in our director, Brad Silberling, from *NYPD Blue*. Brad's impressive to watch.

"It's a joy working with the other ghosts, Brad Garrett and Joe [*Viper*] Nipote. We got used to each other's characters and how they complemented each other. Christina Ricci is a real sweetheart; a good kid and a good actor, and the same goes for Bill Pullman [who plays the trio's main target of ghostly abuse]. He pulls it off.

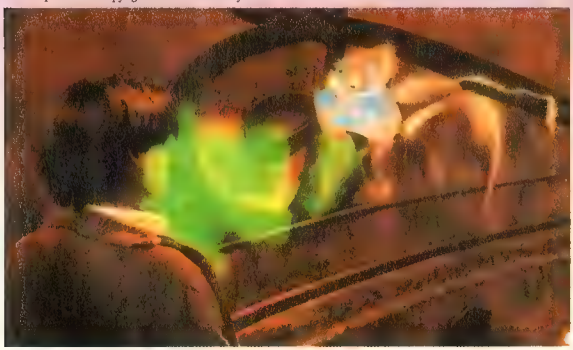
"Being Stinkie is a wonderful feeling," he says of his ectoplasmic alter-ego. "With Stinkie, I used every trick in the book to connect him to the best elements of the supernatural. I've seen everything, so I was able to pick and choose my comic choices from the whole library of ghostly performances."

**Alaskey was heretofore best known as the voice of Plucky Duck on *Tiny Toons*.**

The actor's career took off because of a talking moose. "I started out with Bill Scott, who's best known as Bullwinkle," he reveals. "Bill was co-producer and one of the head writers of *Bullwinkle*, although he didn't take much credit for any of that, let alone all the parts he voiced: Bullwinkle, Mr. Peabody, Dudley Do-right, George of the Jungle. He was taking a 25th anniversary tour with June Foray [who voiced Rocky] around 1985-86, visiting local radio stations across the country.

"I was in Boston, on a morning show with a couple guys—one who told jokes, the other one laughed. I came in and did funny voices every half-hour. We often had guest stars, and I had to write several sketches for Rocky and Bullwinkle and the parts I was gonna play. Bill thought I sounded good and this wonderful old gent said to me, 'If you move out West, I'll not only get you work with our tour, but I'll get you into cartoons, get you Taft-Hartleyed [allow him to join the Screen Actors Guild] and put you to work.' He even helped me move into my first apartment, this wonderful, 64-year-old guy," Alaskey laughs. "Bill Scott was my Fractured Fairy Godfather."

All Casper Photos: Copyright 1995 Universal City Studios & Amblin Entertainment



**"As Stinkie, I worked in all kinds of gestures and expressions that the animators could use," reveals Alaskey.**

As a voice actor, one of his greatest roles came when "I played Yosemite Sam in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. I get a 30-second billing, but Mel Blanc [Sam's original voice], was still alive and the director, Bob Zemeckis, explained to me that Mel was beginning to sound older and Sam was hard for him to do.

"I wrote Mel a letter saying, 'I feel very funny about taking this part, I know everyone in the world would have thought you would have played this. It's an honor for me to take it and I hope I do it justice.' My favorite compliment was that people didn't believe it was me, they thought it was Mel! It's too bad; he didn't even mention the movie in his autobiography [*What's Up, Mel?*]. He was Bugs, Daffy and Porky in *Roger Rabbit*." Alaskey also voiced LBJ in Zemeckis' *Forrest Gump*.

"Most of my work has been in the genre of fantasy, SF and horror. I'm in *Spaced Invaders*. I was Dr. Ziplock, an exact rip-off of Dr. Strangelove," the actor confesses. "I'm not really proud of that work, but I did get to work with Royal Dano."

There is *one* film where some fans saw Alaskey's face. "My big one was 1988's *Mr. Christmas Dinner*, which is now called *Lucky Stiff*. It was Anthony [*Psycho*] Perkins' second and last film as a director. I can't tell you how it felt to work for a crazy guy like Norman Bates...because Tony was the only sane guy on our set," he smiles. "Tony had the most Hollywood experience and knew a heckuva lot.

"It was great fun—I was Ron Douglas, a 300-pound, well-meaning fat guy who wants to get married. He's such an emotional basket case, he's willing to follow anybody who gives him the slightest encouragement. In this case, she's played by Donna Dixon, who's the fetching—literally—member of a cannibal clan. It was up to me in this movie to fall in love with her, fall out of love and try to escape her and her backwoods brood."

Alaskey was also the uncle on the SF sitcom *Out of This World*, but "I've lost a lot of weight since then," the slim actor says happily. "I've trimmed down quite a bit. Unfortunately, we've had many great, big actors who've died before their time, such as Victor Buono and John Candy."

Of course, he's best known for *Tiny Toons*. *Plucky* also headlined his own short-lived TV series. "When Plucky had his own show, they scheduled us

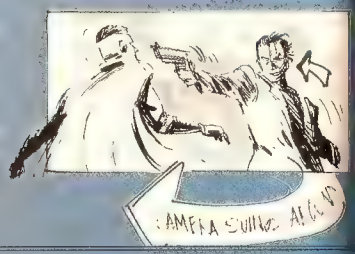
*(continued on page 64)*



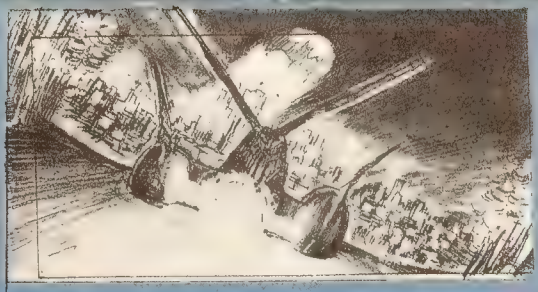
Design & Layout: Freddy Collado Ghostly Tm Trademark Harvey Comics

# THE ART OF BATMAN FOREVER

*Witness the visions of the New York City that never was—the Gotham City of "Batman Forever."*



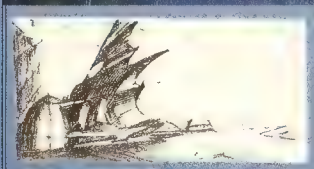
Storyboards are essential elements of any director's arsenal, and Joel Schumacher used them extensively for the action sequences of *Batman Forever*.

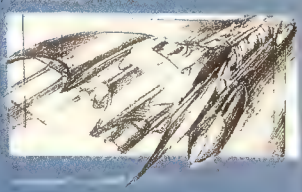


An archetypal piece of pop culture hardware, the redesigned Batmobile plays a big part in *Batman Forever*'s action.

*Wayne Enterprises adopts a different mask when the day fades and the night reigns, just like its owner, Bruce Wayne.*

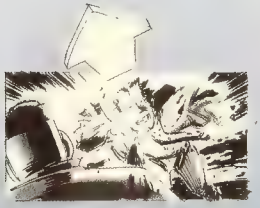
Design ■ Layout: Marc Bernardin

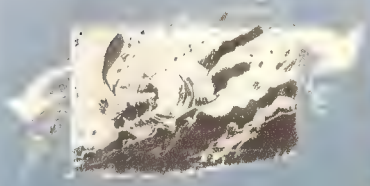


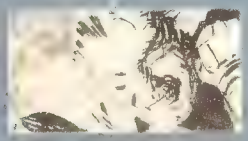


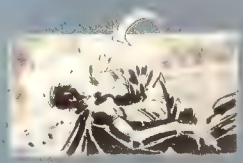
Although all of the Batmobile's action was storyboarded, that didn't stop Chris O'Donnell (Robin) from crashing it during a take.

This exciting sequence feature a knock-down drag-out fight between Two-Face (Tommy Lee Jones) and Robin. When you're spending hundreds of thousands of dollars per day to film, you can't afford to make up action sequences as you go.









All Art: Courtesy Warner Bros. All Art: Trademark & Copyright 1995 DC Comics

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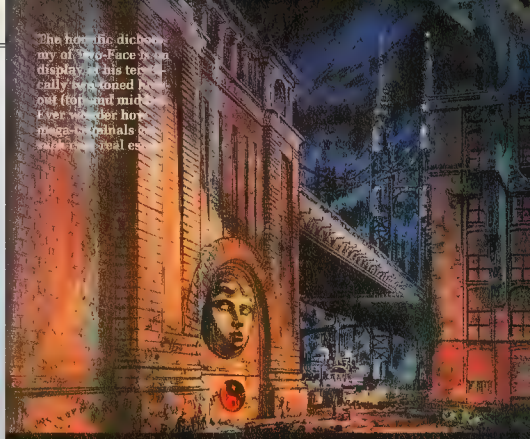

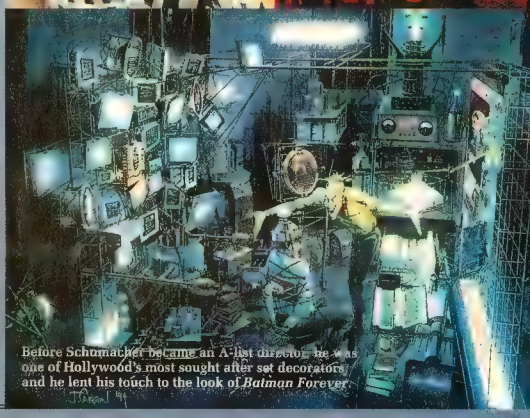

Before Schumacher became an A-list director, he was one of Hollywood's most sought after set decorators, and he lent his touch to the look of *Batman Forever*.

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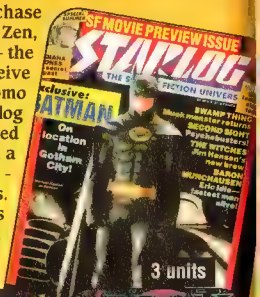


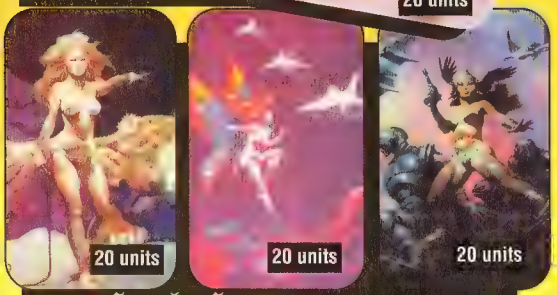


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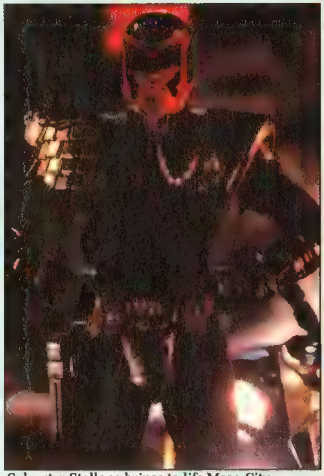
# DREDD ON ARRIVAL

***With Judge Dredd on the big screen, William Wisher looks back at the road to Mega-City One.***

By MARC SHAPIRO

Screenwriter William Wisher knows his history. And in the case of *Judge Dredd*'s odyssey from comic book to motion picture, he knows the project's roots run pretty deep. "They've been trying to get this film off the ground for years. I'm real happy that I was the first guy to write a draft that actually got the movie made."

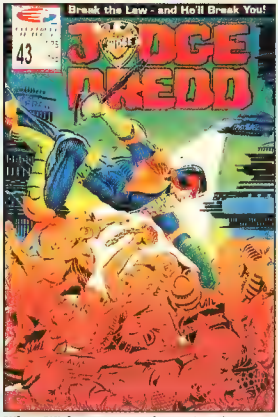
Wisher hasn't had much time to bask in the glory of bringing one of comics' grimmest heroes to the silver screen. He recently completed a final polish on *Broken Arrow*, the John Woo-directed nuclear thriller, and is preparing to script the big-screen version of the '60s TV series *Combat*. A soft-spoken but earnest writer, Wisher is by his own estimation "not prone to being politically correct." Especially as it pertains to how *Judge Dredd* star and notorious script polisher Sylvester Stallone treated his take on the helmeted enforcer.



**Sylvester Stallone brings to life Mega-City One's hardest lawman in the big-screen adventure adapted from the comics by screenwriter William Wisher.**

"Stallone behaved himself," chuckles Wisher. "I had heard the stories about what he tends to do with scripts when he comes onto a project, but I had also heard that was happening less and less. He came onto *Judge Dredd* after the script had been written and he was really pleased. My understanding is that he was a good soldier regarding my script."

Art: Cliff Robinson



**When Wisher came on the project, he was given "a three-and-a-half-foot thick stack of *Judge Dredd* books."**

Wisher's introduction to *Judge Dredd*, which he reports was once intended for Arnold Schwarzenegger, "but that fell through," came in December 1991, not long after the release of *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. "I was contacted by the producers. I had never heard of *Judge Dredd*, but they explained to me that it was this English comic book set in the future and that it was very edgy. It sounded good to me, so I said I would do it."

The deal made, the writer, in search of a story to hang Dredd's helmet on, was sent packing with what he remembers as "a three-and-a-half-foot stack of *Judge Dredd* books.

"We were hunting for just the right story that would work on the screen," he continues. "And, as I was searching for something in the books that might work, I discovered that I liked the comics a lot and, in particular, the idea that Dredd was basically a fascist: judge, jury and executioner all rolled into one. I also thought it was cool how the story was played out in a dark, edgy, comedic way."

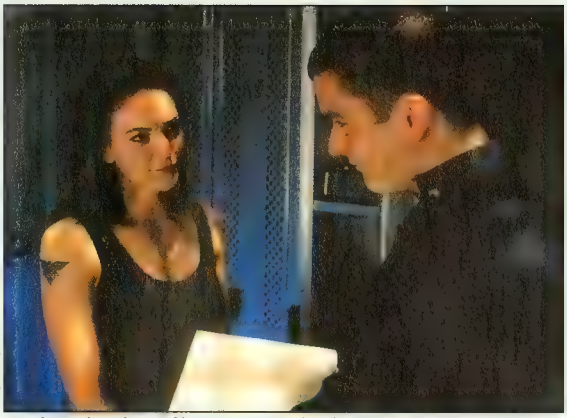
But while he was fascinated by the *Judge Dredd* comics, the screenwriter in him instinctively knew that making a movie with Dredd as the main character would be tricky. "The bottom line was that we had to make Dredd appeal to a very wide audience. So, the big question was how do I make this guy accessible to a large audience, make him likable, find the key to understanding him and, at the same time, *not* violate the comic book's integrity. My reaction was, 'How in the hell am I going to do this?' "

**"I kept the name but turned the character into a low-rent criminal with a pretty good heart," explains Wisher of Fergie's transformation from troll to Rob Schneider.**

Perhaps surprisingly, Wisher did not confer with Judge Dredd's comics creators. "I never spoke with them directly and I didn't particularly want to," he confesses. "I did hear from them at one point, and they said, 'Well you can't change this and you can't change that.' It was at that point I realized that, while I understood how they felt, they were comic-book guys and they really didn't understand screenwriting. I realized right away that dealing with them was not going to be helpful and the more contact I had with them, the more acrimonious they were going to become. So, I decided to use their material as the source of my research, because anything they had to say had already been said in their *work*."

Ultimately, it was "a sliver of a comic-book story" involving the arch-villain Rico that gave Wisher "the opportunity to hold up a dark mirror to Dredd that would allow him to see himself reflected back."

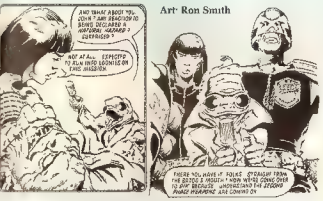
The *Judge Dredd* storyline, painted in broad strokes by the writer, opens in the low-down and dirty future that is Mega-City One, with Rico, a former Judge who has been arrested by Dredd and allegedly executed. But Rico, thanks to the intervention of the equally diabolical Griffin, is very much alive and returns to a city in political upheaval. Along the way, Dredd is framed for murder and must try to



Design & Layout: Jim McLernon

**"Hershey realizes that Dredd is a good man and, as the story unfolds, ends up defending him and helping him out," Wisher explains of Diane Lane's character.**

unravel a myriad of political and social mysteries en route to a final confrontation with Rico.


AND THAT ABOUT YOU... DON'T SHE REACH FOR A BOMB, DECLARE A HOSTAGE SITUATION...
NOT AT ALL... EXPECTED TO PLAN INTO SOMETHING THIS MISSION.
THERE YOU HAVE IT, ROLKE. OTHERWISE KNOWN THE DETOX 2 MOUTH - NOW WE'VE COME OVER TO HIM BECAUSE UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION. ANARCHY ARE COMING ON.

Art: Ron Smith

**One of the minor supporting characters in the comics, Judge Hershey was built up into Wisher's female lead for the film.**

As fans who've seen the film know, there's a bit more complexity to the story. "Dredd discovers that Rico is his genetic twin, and that they were both part of a cloning experiment. But a couple of extra ingredients were added to Rico, and he has gone bad. So, the set-up is that Dredd is the ultimate good guy and Rico is the total bad apple. Quite simply, Dredd looks at Rico and questions himself."

Speaking of questions, the biggest one surrounding *Judge Dredd* once Stallone picked up the helmet, was whether or not he would run around the entire film without showing his face. Die-hard *Dredd* comics fans know that his comic-book counterpart *always* wears his helmet. Nevertheless, the answer, Wisher notes, was a foregone conclusion.

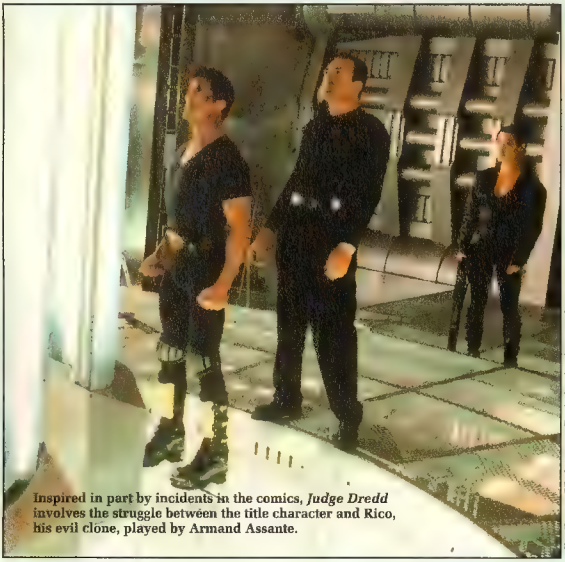
"I knew Dredd was going to *have to be* without his helmet for at least some of the time even before there was a first draft of the screenplay," he says candidly. "The way the story goes, at a certain point, the helmet comes off and, for the rest of the movie, Dredd basically runs around without it. I knew it was going to be a drastic change from the comic book, but that didn't really concern me. Let's face it, when you have a superstar in the role, you want to see his face and you're going to see a lot of Stallone's face. But he's not going to just suddenly fling the helmet aside and break all the rules of logic."

Wisher pauses at this point, perhaps aware that some of what he's saying may ruffle the feathers of comic-book purists. "I'm not breaking the rules. That was important to me. From the beginning, *I* wanted to be as faithful to the comic book as I could. Sure, I invented a lot of stuff. The movie's story doesn't exist in comic-book form. But as much of the comic-book world as possible has been preserved in the film.

"I'm not putting down the comics. It's just a different medium. Comics are not set up to explore characters particularly well. Sure, they do great stuff in comics, but film is an entirely different kind of entertainment."

One liberty that Wisher took great pains to avoid was leaving out many of the comic's supporting cast of characters. "Almost everybody from the comic book makes at least a token appearance in the film. I tried to put as many people from the comic in the movie as I could, even if I knew I was going to have to change their characters around in order to make them work in the movie.

"Fergie in the *Judge Dredd* comics is a near-imbecilic, club-wielding troll. But in one of the comics I read, he actually winds up helping Dredd out of a jam. I liked that notion, so I kept the name but turned the character into a low-rent criminal with a pretty good heart [played by Rob Schneider]. As the story progresses, he's somebody



**Inspired in part by incidents in the comics, *Judge Dredd* involves the struggle between the title character and Rico, his evil clone, played by Armand Assante.**

All Judge Dredd Photos: Richard Blanshard/Copyright 1995 Cinergi Pictures & Cinergi Productions NV

"I don't think what he wanted was really what the film was *supposed* to be," Wisher says of *Judge Dredd* director Danny Cannon (left).

In Wisher's original draft, Judge Griffin (Jurgen Prochnow) and his corrupt system of Judges was overthrown by Dredd and his citizen army.

who latches onto Dredd, and lets him know what life on the other side is like.

"Hershey is a rather small character in the comics who I actually built up for the film," Wisher explains. "She's a younger Judge who isn't as harsh as Dredd, and who questions the ruthlessness of the Judge system. In the movie, she's telling Dredd to lighten up a bit. At first, he kind of ignores her, but he ends up having quite a bit of respect for her. Hershey [Diane Lane] realizes that Dredd is a good man and, as the story unfolds, ends up defending him and helping him out."

Rico, according to Wisher, made one of the more full-bodied leaps to the screen, where his evil is personified by Armand Assante. "In the books, Rico was just kind of a bloodthirsty killer. What I did with his character was to make his evil a bit more operatic in nature. He's now more interesting to my way of thinking."

Wisher began writing the first of what he estimates as "five or six drafts" of the *Judge Dredd* script late in 1992. He completed a final polish of interim writer Steven de Souza's drafts in October 1993. Other writers had been involved in the project—including Jim Crumley, Crash Leyland, Howard Chaykin and John Moore—throughout various drafts in the movie's almost decade-long odyssey to the screen, but it's Wisher's version that made it before the cameras. The WGA-arbitrated final film credits Wisher and de Souza for the script while Michael DeLuca and Wisher earn story credit. And the writer claims from first draft to last, his vision of *Judge Dredd* stayed fairly intact.

"The first two drafts didn't really change that much. In fact, there were only two big changes all the way through. In my early drafts, I had Dredd and Rico confronting each other in the ruins of the lab where they were created. That changed once director Danny Cannon came aboard. He had some

Art: By & Copyright 1987 Frank Miller/Colors: Lynn Varley

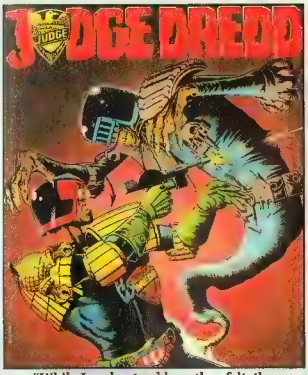
## Lone Wolf & Combat

William Wisher hears it all the time. "Whatever happened to *Lone Wolf and Cub*? It comes up more often than I would have *ever* thought. People are still interested in seeing that movie get made."

But Wisher really doesn't have an answer. "I can't tell you anything, because I don't know anything," Wisher says, of *Lone Wolf*'s current status. "I haven't thought about it in years. As far as I know, there are no immediate plans to do it."

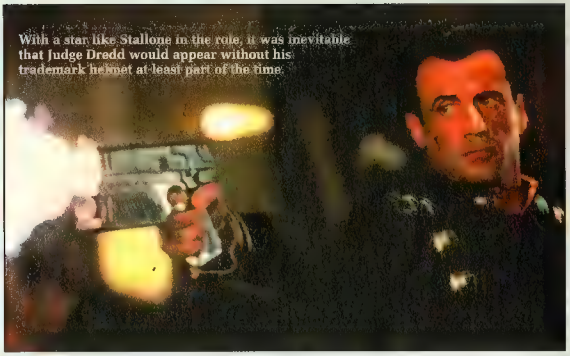
But the author does have fond memories of the effort, based on Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima's classic Japanese samurai comic. "I still think it was a wonderful project and I still really love the script I wrote. The whole idea is very good. The only reason the film never got made was because of a business thing. There was a disagreement over rights and control. If those things ever get cleared up and everything is resolved, I would be more than happy to step back in."

In the meantime, Wisher is preparing to script *Combat*, the movie version on the '60s TV series which will star Bruce Willis. "This is going to be a great big sweaty World War II movie. The reason I wanted to do *Combat* was that it would give me the




Art: Brian Bolland

**"While I understood how they felt, they were comic-book guys and really didn't understand screenwriting," notes Wisher of his contact with Dredd's comic creators.**



**With a star like Stallone in the role, it was inevitable that Judge Dredd would appear without his trademark helmet at least part of the time.**

specific changes in mind and one of those was that the lab had been preserved in pristine condition and that Griffin [Jurgen Prochnow] and Rico were going to start it back up again and make more clones in their own image.

"As for the other change, originally, I had Dredd leading an army of Mega-City citizens against Griffin as the Judge system was collapsing. Basically, the storyline had Dredd finding these citizens hiding. They make him their leader and they follow him as they attempt to take the city back. But the film no longer ends that way. Now the final showdown is there, but it's on a much smaller scale. I felt that my ending was important and frankly that's something I miss in the film. But such are the fortunes of war," he sighs.

Once Stallone joined the project, Wisher admits to having creatively held his breath. "But I didn't hear too much from Stallone. He liked the script and the character very much. To my way of thinking, he was happy."

Wisher admits that things weren't quite as smooth with director Cannon (who discusses the movie in STARLOG #217). "Cannon had a lighter film in mind than I did. Certainly, we both saw *Judge Dredd* as a comedy, but Danny wanted to make the film more of a thriller and a much broader comedy. In some of the changes he made, I don't think he achieved that. I also don't think what he wanted was really what the film was *supposed* to be. The comedy is much broader now than what I initially thought it should be. There was a lot of stuff we were struggling with, and I fought as hard as I could to preserve those themes that I thought were important. Essentially, *Judge Dredd* turned out to be the same film I started out with, so I believe I was pretty successful."

The verdict on *Dredd* is now in moviegoers' hands, but there's no question about the success of Wisher's previous genre entry, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. It's a film many genre buffs consider a classic script made into a classic movie.

"That's a lot of classics in one sentence," laughs Wisher. "I *do* think *Terminator 2* is a really good film, but you never know how something will hit people. At the time, you're only trying

chance to reinvent World War II movies for a whole generation of kids who never saw them."

The writer claims that the only similarity between the TV series and his movie will be the characters' names. "The series never really had a storyline other than the fact that the soldiers were fighting their way from Normandy to Berlin. This is going to be much bigger than the TV series. What's going to be fun about this movie is that it was the last big crusade in the world. This was the world's last great battle between the forces of light and dark. *Combat* will be a story about a group of average guys who get caught up in this neo-mythic battle between good and evil."

Wisher, a comic-book kid, found his fantasy fix between the pages of *Spider-Man*, *Batman*, *Sgt. Rock* and *The Haunted Tank* while growing up. Consequently, he would love to see the movie adaptation of a number of them. "I would love to do *Sgt. Rock* but, I guess I'm pretty much getting that opportunity with *Combat*."

He also has visions of making a return trip to the world of *Judge Dredd* if the box-office fates allow. "I'm definitely up for a *Dredd* sequel, says William Wisher. "I've had ideas from day one, and we've even discussed them. But you've got to do the first one before you can do the second."

*—Marc Shapiro*

Among the horrors that face Dredd in the film are the unformed clones created by Rico and Griffin to do their bidding.

T2 Photo: Copyright 1990 Carolco

Wisher, who wrote *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, describes the film as being "about the importance of one single human being, which was Sarah Conner."

to do the best work you can. People have talked about *T2* in those terms and it's flattering. But nobody sets out to write a classic film. *T2* was always *It's A Wonderful Life* with guns to me. It was about the importance of the single human being, which was Sarah Connor. I think we found the emotional, human center of that movie and, because of that, everything pretty much flowed from there."

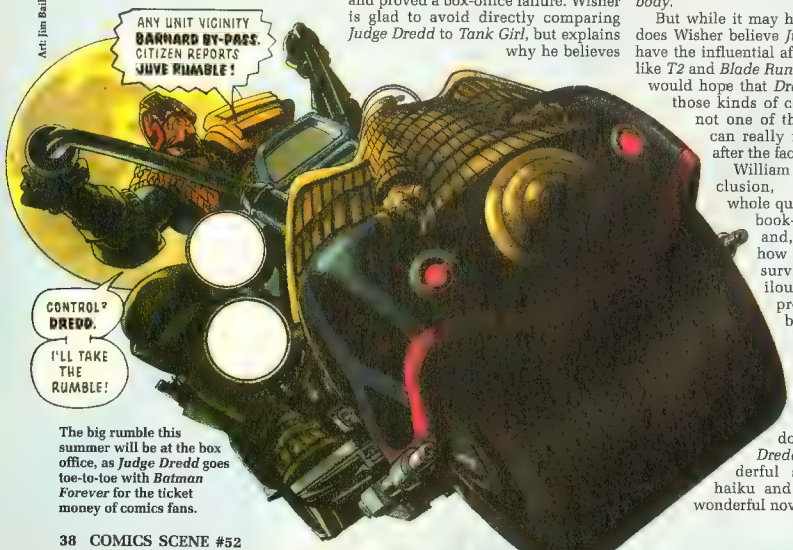
A longtime fan of science fiction in all its forms, Wisher offers a personal observation on the genre's role. "Science fiction to me is *only* useful in informing people where they are now. This is usually accomplished by either changing one element of our being or setting things in another time period. Commenting on society's personal, social and philosophical present is what science fiction truly does best. And that was how it worked with *Judge Dredd*. It takes us to another place and, by adding a whole lot of satire, it is telling us where we *might* be heading."

Wisher is reminded that a less visible British comic, *Tank Girl*, was recently made into a movie (CS #50) and proved a box-office failure. Wisher is glad to avoid directly comparing *Judge Dredd* to *Tank Girl*, but explains why he believes *Dredd* won't suffer the same fate. "I think the reason *Judge Dredd* will work is that it's about some very basic things. It's a cautionary tale about the society in which we live. At its center is the story of a man trying to find out who he is. I've found that stories work best when they explore the very primal questions that people have. *Judge Dredd* may be a fanciful rollercoaster ride, but it's also about something very human. That's the main reason I think this film will be much more successful than *Tank Girl*: Because it explores themes that are important to *everybody*."

But while it may have lofty intent, does Wisher believe *Judge Dredd* will have the influential afterlife that films like *T2* and *Blade Runner* have had? "I would hope that *Dredd* would have those kinds of coattails, but it's not one of those things you can really figure out until after the fact."

William Wisher, in conclusion, addresses the whole question of comic-book-based movies and, in particular, how well *Dredd* has survived the perilous adaptation process. "Comic books are like haiku, because they don't have the space and films are like novels. What I believe we've done with *Judge Dredd* is take a wonderful science fiction haiku and turn it into a wonderful novel." CS

Art: Jim Baikie




The big rumble this summer will be at the box office, as *Judge Dredd* goes toe-to-toe with *Batman Forever* for the ticket money of comics fans.

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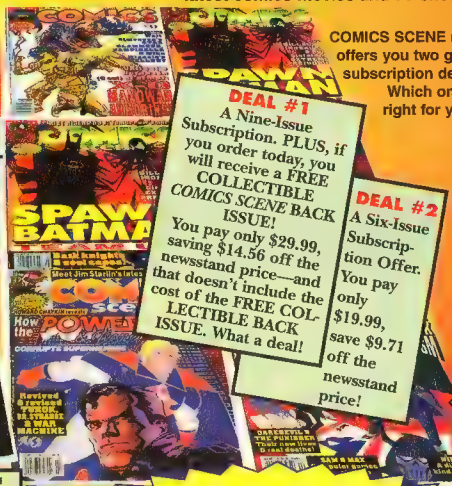


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# *Mask mania hits Saturday morning when the green-faced gremlin gets animated.*

**There's a new sheriff in town...and his name is Stanley Ipkiss. The Mask is back in pen and ink for Saturday mornings, and producer Gary Hartle tells how.**

By BOB MILLER

All Photos, Courtesy Film Roman, Inc.

It's inevitable that a hero who becomes a living cartoon would one day become an *animated* cartoon. And so, the Mask has come full circle, making the transition from comic book to cartoon-inspired movie and now, a Saturday-morning TV series for CBS.

"*The Mask* is its own world, kind of a retro-world, but it has a certain kind of realism," says producer Gary Hartle. "In other words, anything that happens in reality will happen on the show – unless it's the Mask. Every time Stanley Ipkiss becomes the Mask, he's the *only* one who can break all the rules. When the Mask does something, there are no rules."

According to Hartle, the series relies on both the Dark Horse comic books and the movie for inspiration. "Some of the characters are in the comic books and some of them the writer made up. There will be many characters who weren't in the movie."

*The Mask*'s story editor is Duane Capizzi, a veteran writer who began with the aborted *Robotech Sentinels*, then story-edited *ALF* (the cartoon). He spent five years at Disney TV story-editing *TaleSpin*, *Darkwing Duck*, *Bonkers*, *Aladdin*, *The Return of Jafar* and now *The Mask*. He's currently story-editing another Jim Carrey-related property, *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, a Nelvana project for CBS, and Eric Larson's *Savage Dragon* for the USA Network.

"The writing is really funny," Hartle says. "Duane has done a fabulous job as far as how all these characters interact, and how they relate to each other."

For the cartoon, the Mask/Stanley Ipkiss will be Rob Paulsen, voice of such characters as Mighty Max, Pinky

Mouse, Rude Dog and Yakko Warner.

What happened to Jim Carrey? "Jim Carrey makes too much money to work on this show," Hartle says frankly. "I don't even know if he was approached. I think they figured right off the bat that he would be expensive, so we went straight to a sound-alike. We had many actors come in, but we thought Rob was the closest to the Mask persona. That was the most important one to hit."

Hartle points out that, unlike typical superheroes with secret identities, nearly everyone in the show suspects Ipkiss is the Mask. Ipkiss gets away with it because no one's able to prove it. That doesn't stop people from trying, among them the hard-nosed cop, Lt. Kellaway (voiced by Neal Ross).

"He's basically Joe Friday, and he suspects Stanley is the Mask," Hartle explains. "Kellaway is going to nail Stanley one of these days. And so we made him much more aggressive and tougher than the guy [played by Peter Riegert] in the movie. His partner Doyle [Jim Cummings] is a lot like he was in the movie. He's a sidekick, but he has no business being a sidekick.

"Mayor Tilton [Kevin Richardson] wants everyone to overlook all crime that's happening while he gets his agenda going. If there's a crime going on—like we have Walter kidnapping Stanley and he is yelling, 'Help, help'—the Mayor stands in front of the camera so he can talk about his campaign. He doesn't want all that 'side noise' getting in the way.

"Mrs. Peenman [Tress MacNeille] is a lot like she was in the movie. She's a crabby old lady with a shotgun across her lap watching *Jeopardy!* She gives Stanley a hard time, even if it's not his fault.

**What would a hero be without a villain to match wits against? Nada, as Hartle knows. "Pretorius [voiced by Tim Curry] is his main nemesis."**

"Besides Mrs. Peenman, there is Lars [Cummings] and his pet monkey [Pepe, articulated by Frank Welker]. Lars always wanted to be an organ-grinder, but he has no business being an organ-grinder. He's not even Italian or a gypsy. He's just this blond-haired Nordic guy who talks with [a Scandinavian accent] and got himself a monkey. His pet monkey isn't nice. It's a wild monkey. Lars thinks just because he has a suit and a monkey he's going to be an organ-grinder, and yet this monkey is always jumping on his face and biting his nose.

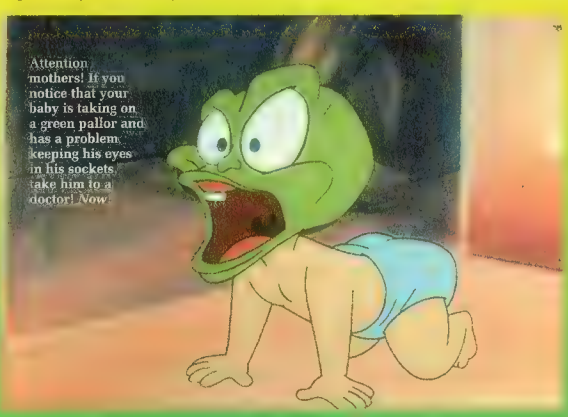
"The nice lady is Mrs. Forthwright [Mary McDonald-Lewis] and her baby [Baby Forthwright, voiced by Welker]. She's real talkative. Her whole job is supporting the Mayor's campaign. Every new thing the Mayor wants to do, she wants to do. She's always shoving her baby onto Stanley.

"Peggy Brandt [voiced by Heidi Shannon] is the gal who sold him up the river in the movie [then played by Amy Yasbeck]. She has repented since then. She wants the Mask to give her her next story. She works for one of these rag sheets that print, 'Space Aliens Abduct Michael Jackson.'

"Milo [the dog] is exactly as he was in the movie. Frank Welker is doing Milo, the monkey and the baby. He's really amazing to watch, because you can see him do something deep-throated and then he goes to doing a baby and is very convincing as a baby. That's the reason he gets the big bucks," Hartle remarks.

"Charlie Schumacher [Mark Taylor], Stanley's friend in the movie [Richard Jeni] is now the bank manager. Charlie tries to come up with schemes to make the bank money, which will get him a promotion, and yet Stanley is the one

**"*The Mask* is its own world, kind of a retro-world, but it has a certain kind of realism," says Hartle, who honed his craft on *Taz-Mania* and *Animaniacs*.**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Design & Layout: Jim McLernon

who does all those things."

Another character from the movie is the Psychiatrist, who's reprised by Ben Stein. "For the most part, all the people in the lineup are intersecting with Stanley in the middle of it. He's pretty much a milquetoast getting pushed around by everyone," Hartle says.

And then, there are the bad guys. "We have a *lot* of villains," Hartle notes. "Pretorius [voiced by Tim Curry] is his main nemesis. He doesn't see himself as evil; he sees himself as a scientist. If a few million people get killed in the process of his experiment, well, what can you do? It's in the name of science.

"Pretorius is able to separate his head from his body, and these mechanical legs come out so he can do both full-head projects and body projects. The body can take care of all the heavy stuff and his head can continue to do the thinking."

The arch-fiend is introduced in the episodes "To Be or Not to Be...The Mask!, Parts 1 and 2," originally "It's Not Easy Being Green"; the title was changed to avoid legal entanglements with Henson Associates.

"Pretorius knows Stanley's secret," Hartle reveals. "He thinks if he gets ahold of the mask, he can make knockoffs of it, and have a super fighting force of Mask-type villains.

"Walter is this unstoppable monster that Pretorius sends against Stanley. He's played by nobody because he's never going to speak. There's only one expression he'll ever have. He might raise his eyebrows a little bit. In the comic book, Walter is almost as indestructible as the Mask. He's this hood that, in one of our shows, falls off a 40-foot building and makes a big crack in the ground, only to rise from it."

In the episode "Double Reverse," Hartle says, "We have one guy, Kablammus, who used to work in a balloon factory. He was trying to make an unbreakable balloon. He becomes a supervillain who can expand his whole body, and then he'll explode and there will be a new one underneath. It's really strange, really bizarre.

"We have another character called Skillit [from the episodes "Shadow of a Skillit" and "All Hallow's Eve"]. He's our version of Peter Pan, but he's an evil Peter Pan. He steals everyone's shadows. When their shadows are stolen, they begin to age, so it's the Mask's job to get the shadows back."

Hartle's favorite villains are Jack and Eddie, introduced in the third episode, "The Terrible Twos." These are kids who always wanted to be superheroes. To do that, they expose themselves to radiation.

"Of course, they get sick instead of superpowered," Hartle says. "But they eventually do mutate. One becomes this putty thing, and the other guy becomes a fish who basically can't do anything at all. He can't even crawl. That's all he does; he's a fish who just lays around.

"There's a series of events where the baby goes flying through the air, gets stuck on Putty Man's back and Fish Guy looks down and says, 'His powers are better than mine.' So, he was better off being human. Later, when the Mask defeats him and throws him in the water, it turns out that the Fish Guy can't even swim.

"We bring him back [in "Martian

According to Hartle, "The comic and the movie have a lot of violence, but CBS won't do that. So we're playing up the comic angle."

"Jim Carrey makes too much money to work on this show," Hartle offers. However, his influence—or rather JLM's—is felt in the CBS cartoon.

Mask"]. The only superpower he gets is, he begins to stink because he has been on land for so long. The story is really screwball, really off the wall."

Poor Jack and Eddie. Do they ever become human again?

"No," Hartle says with a smile. "Maybe if we got into more episodes, but not yet."

For the first season, *The Mask* will have 15 episodes, opening with a two-parter that sets the tone for the series. Meanwhile, a live-action movie sequel (again starring Carrey) is in the works. According to Hartle, there will be no cross-referencing between the projects.

"We're a separate entity," he says. "The comic and the movie have a lot of violence, but CBS won't do that. So we're playing up the comic angle. As much as possible, we're trying to keep up the humor in the show.

"We're definitely staying away from things like pointing a gun at someone's face. If we have to point any kind of gun, we have to make it over-exaggerated or ridiculous; they'll let that fly.

"So far, Kellaway hasn't had to pull out a gun. Other cops may have them out and around, but nobody has shot anybody. It's funny, because it works for Kellaway's persona. He'll come up and say, 'What's going on in that building?' They'll tell him that an art forger has all these explosives. Kellaway will kick open the door and throw people around. He's a man's man police guy.

"In 'Martian Mask,' Kellaway comes up against this FBI guy [Agent X], who thinks the Mask is an alien. These guys go toe-to-toe and it's really funny, where Kellaway protects his jurisdiction.

"I like Kellaway so much because he'll come up in his car and smash another car into a fire hydrant, and tell Doyle to write that guy a ticket, even though Kellaway was the one that did it. [To him,] it's *his* mission and that's all there is. He's great to make fun of."

*The Mask* is produced at Film Roman, the studio responsible for *The Simpsons*, *The Critic* and

*(continued on page 62)*

*The Mask* has quite a set of supporting characters, including a familiar face from the film—the crabby, old, shotgun-wielding Mrs. Peenman (Tress MacNeille).

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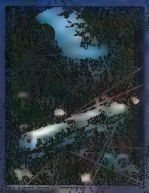

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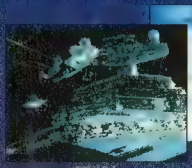

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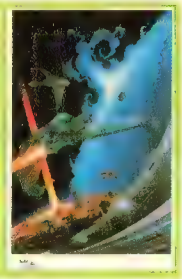

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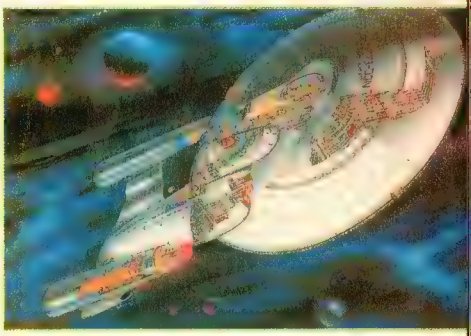

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AS WRITER & ARTIST, LARRY LIEBER WAS PRESENT AT THE BIRTH OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE!

# MONSTER MASTER

BY WILL MURRAY

He is a seminal figure of the early days of the Marvel Age of Comics. His fantasy stories regularly filled the pages of classic pre-superhero Marvel titles like *Strange Tales*, *Tales of Suspense* and *Journey into Mystery*. He scripted the origins of the Mighty Thor, Iron Man and Ant-Man and what is arguably Marvel's first Silver Age superhero—Dr. Droom (later Dr. Druid). His run on *The Rawhide Kid* is considered classic. But he's not who you think he is.

His name is Larry Lieber. For a long time, he has been the unsung hero of the Marvel Age of Comics.

"Stan Lee is my brother," Lieber explains. "That's how I came to work for them. Stan was writing there and I got kind of interested in it. Marvel was owned by relatives—the Goodmans. I used to draw a lot. The most natural thing to draw was comics. I copied them and got into it. I guess I was good at it. I just drifted into it then. Stan came back after the war and I started to work for him for awhile, but then I had some other jobs."

The self-effacing Lieber no longer recalls the first strips he drew in the long-ago mid-50s, except that they were romance stories and he was too slow to make a living at it. His comics career might have ended there, but for what seemed like the end of Marvel—then called Atlas. The company was reeling under a distribution crisis that led to a severe implosion of titles in 1957. For months, Atlas tottered on the brink. Then in 1958, Jack Kirby returned to the bullpen and publisher Martin Goodman approved a modest expansion.

There was one problem: editor Stan Lee, having laid off his entire writing staff, could not handle the increased workload. He needed a new writer, someone trainable with a fresh approach.

Enter Larry Lieber, just out of the Air Force and studying at the Art Student's League while he sorted out his future. "I felt I had to earn a living," Lieber recalls. "I wasn't fast enough at drawing comics, so Stan asked me if I wanted to write comics. I said, 'I don't know how to write them.' He said, 'You can write. I read your letters in the service.' He taught me to write. That's when I started writing *Journey into Mystery*, *Tales of Suspense* and *Tales to Astonish*."

At the time, most of these books

BORN AT THE DAWN OF THE '60S, FIN FANG FOOM, THE QUINTESSENTIAL STAR OF THE MARVEL MONSTER COMICS, IS ONE OF THE FEW BEASTS FROM THAT PERIOD TO REMAIN ACTIVE IN THE '90S.

Art: Jack Kirby/Dick Ayers

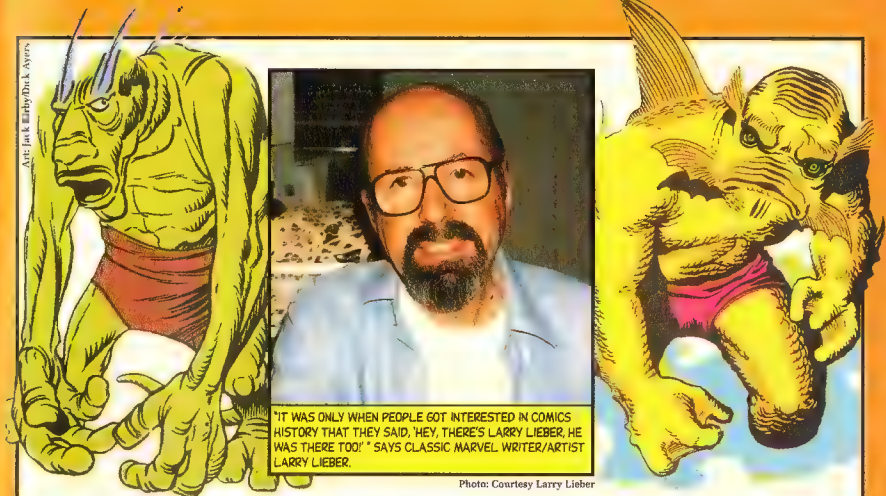

Art: Jack Kirby/Dick Ayers
"IT WAS ONLY WHEN PEOPLE GOT INTERESTED IN COMICS HISTORY THAT THEY SAID, 'HEY, THERE'S LARRY LIEBER, HE WAS THERE TOO!' " SAYS CLASSIC MARVEL WRITER/ARTIST LARRY LIEBER.

Photo: Courtesy Larry Lieber

were just starting, or like *Strange Tales* had been revived after a hiatus. They featured fantasy tales often starring improbably-named giant monsters like Zzutak, Colossus, Googam and Goom, Son of Googam. This was the beginning of the Marvel Age, but no one suspected it. Least of all Larry Lieber.

"I remember—I was then living in Tudor City [a famed NYC apartment community]—the comic books had three stories in them. Usually, the lead story was by Kirby and then Don Heck or somebody else. Steve Ditko would do the last one which Stan wrote himself. Those were special stories with Stan. He liked working with Ditko."

In this casual statement lies the secret of those pre-superhero titles. For years, it has been unclear how many of those stories Lee actually wrote. The answer is deceptively simple: Stan Lee wrote whatever he signed, because he signed everything he wrote!

Still, it wasn't *quite* as simple as that. "Actually, Stan liked his own plots, so he made up all the plots and he would give me a synopsis," Lieber explains. "Remember, I was just learning to write. I would go home and sit in the park in Tudor City, break it down, try to figure out a story and put in the dialogue. I would bring it back to Stan and he would go over it. He would say, 'You don't need this. Change that.' Of course, everything he touched he improved. And, that was how I did those stories."

In the days before *The Fantastic Four*, it was Lieber's job to keep Kirby in scripts. Because there were no credits at that time, readers didn't know—and rarely realize today—that it was Lieber who wrote virtually all those giant monster stories. He remembers it as a very hectic period.

"Jack Kirby was so fast! He could draw about six pages a day, and I was very slow as a writer. So, I was always hurrying to feed Kirby stories. I remember, one Saturday night, running to the post office on 42nd Street, which was open on Saturday, and getting a story out to Jack. 'Whew! Oh boy, now he'll have a story!' Jack would just turn that stuff out, and he was drawing all the monsters. One week it was Grogg, the next it was this monster or that monster. I went on doing them until the superheroes came."

Lieber's scripts—often polished by Lee—were virtually keeping Kirby, Heck and others like Paul Reinman in business. But, Lieber looks back on his work with a certain detachment. "I liked them. I had nothing to compare them to, because I hadn't written anything else. I tried to make the scripts as good as I could, but I never cared afterwards. I was also an artist, so when I would look at Heck, I would be admiring his artwork, not connecting it to my script. I never said, 'Ooh, I gave him a good script and look what he did.' I never sat back from it that much."

In the beginning, Lee wasn't entirely happy with his brother's work. "I was learning to write, so Stan would sometimes be harsh on the writing," Lieber admits. "Sometimes he would say, 'I've got to get a real writer in here, some pro.' So, he hired a couple and then my big, big dream came true when he said to me, 'Larry, I'll tell you something. You're better than these other guys. I've got to stay with you.' " Lieber laughs at the memory. "What I was very good at in those days was making up

RAWHIDE KID
THEY HAD SWORN TO TAKE REVENGE...OR DIE TRYING FOR THIS WAS
THE LAST SHOWDOWN!
RAWHIDE KID
AND NOW--THE EXECUTIONER!

LIEBER MAY BE BEST KNOWN FOR HIS EIGHT-YEAR STINT AS WRITER/ARTIST ON *RAWHIDE KID*.

names. Stan always complimented me. I once wrote a story that took place in the South in a very bigoted area and I called it Goosepan. He loved that name. At the back of the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, they have a list of geographical and biographical names. So, I would get all sorts of foreign names and things."

Although he wrote for such classic monster characters as Fin Fang Foom and the original alien Hulk (later renamed Titan), Lieber didn't come up with those particular names. "Those aren't real words. Those Stan made up. Later, when we did the Ant-Man, I made up Henry Pym. I think Anthony Stark was mine. It's possible I came up with Don Blake, but by no means can I say I did. I don't remember. I had written some of the first stories for Thor, all from Stan's plots. I made up the Uru hammer. I remember calling it that. I wanted something short so it would be easy to letter. It was offbeat and sounded like a foreign language.

"One day—I'm jumping ahead—Roy Thomas was writing *Thor*. He was going through *Bullfinch's Mythology* and said, 'Larry, where did you find this Uru hammer?' I said, 'It's not in any book. I made it up.' So, he looked at me with disbelief. He found the real name was Mjolnir. From then on, it was Mjolnir. Never mind this Uru hammer."

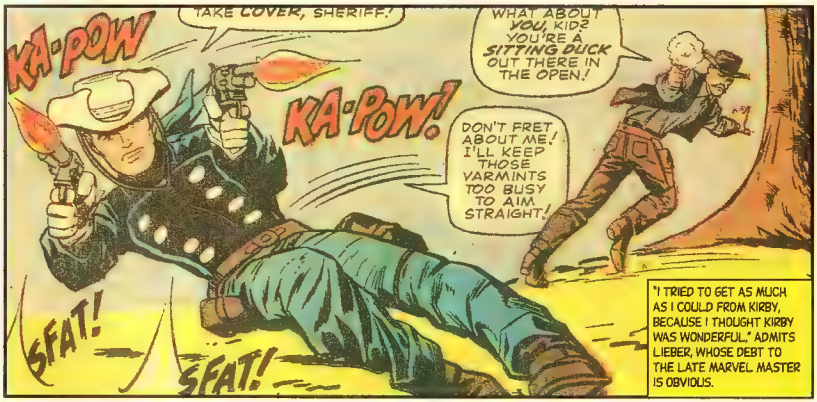
Over time, Lieber's strengths began to emerge. "I did some romance writing. I had to write it from the point-of-view of the girl, but I was very sensitive. I remember Stan thought it was cute: 'You're actually good at writing romance.' I'm not sure when that was. It may have been at the time of the monsters or before."

During the period from May 1958, when Lieber joined the resurgent Marvel, to early 1963, the line was strictly divided into two groups. Lee wrote the titles built around specific genres or characters. Thus, he scripted *Millie the Model*, *Patsy Walker*, *Fantastic Four* and all the Western books, while Lieber was responsible for the anthology fantasy titles—except the Steve Ditko stories and *Amazing Adult Fantasy*. After *The Fantastic Four*, Lee and Kirby began creating new superheroes for the fantasy titles. Since they were Lieber's books, scripting the new characters naturally fell on his shoulders. The first was a revival of one of Lieber's obscure *Tales to Astonish* fantasies.

"Ant-Man started as 'The Man in the Anthill,' " Lieber recalls. "Stan just gave me the story about a guy—I forget the story now—and he turns into an ant-man or is reduced in size, and that was it. To me, the most interesting thing was the drawing problem, because I had to write it so it could be drawn. I remember I went looking through the back of *Merriam-Webster's*. There must have been a scientist or somebody British named Pym and I took the name. Then I thought, 'Henry sounds like a scientist, so it will be Henry.' It didn't sound like Rock or Rick or something. Then, I just wrote the story, and it took off.

"Stan made up Thor the same way," Lieber continues. "He gave me the basic plot—a doctor goes into a cave and finds a hammer. In the first story, the hammer turns him into Thor, then some aliens come. So we

CRAZY CHARACTERS LIKE ANT-MAN MADE THE '60S MARVEL ANTHOLOGY TITLES FAST-PACED, IMAGINATIVE FUN WHOSE INFLUENCE IS FELT TO THIS DAY.
12¢
TALES TO ASTONISH
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
38 DEC.
YOU'RE HOPELESSLY STUCK TO THAT FLYPAPER, ANT-MAN! YOUR OWN ANTS HAVE LED YOU INTO MY TRAP!
ANT-MAN
BETRAYED BY THE ANTS!
Coming: ANT-MAN! THE MOST ASTONISHING H
"STAN JUST GAVE ME A STORY ABOUT A GUY, AND HE TURNS INTO AN ANT-MAN OR IS REDUCED IN SIZE," REVEALS LIEBER, WHO WROTE THE DIMINUTIVE CHARACTER'S EARLY EXPLOITS.
JUDGING FROM THE ERRATIC PATTERN OF THE WAVES, I'D SAY IT'S SOMETHING STRANGE--AND DANGEROUS!
I'D BETTER INVESTIGATE AT ONCE--AS THE ANT-MAN!!
I'LL RELEASE MY VIAL OF REDUCING GAS... AHHH! IT'S SHRINKING ME TO THE SIZE OF...AN ANT!
Art: Jack Kirby/Dick Ayers


KA-POW
TAKE COVER, SHERIFF!
KA-POW!
WHAT ABOUT YOU, KID? YOU'RE A SITTING DUCK OUT THERE IN THE OPEN!
DON'T FRET ABOUT ME! I'LL KEEP THOSE VARMINTS TOO BUSY TO AIM STRAIGHT!
SFAT!
SFAT!

"I TRIED TO GET AS MUCH AS I COULD FROM KIRBY, BECAUSE I THOUGHT KIRBY WAS WONDERFUL," ADMITS LIEBER, WHOSE DEBT TO THE LATE MARVEL MASTER IS OBVIOUS.

Art: Larry Lieber/Pintar Collection

weren't talking mythology so much, and I didn't have to do anything. I said, 'OK, the God of Thunder. I'll take the story.' "

Modestly, Lieber downplays his important contributions to the beginnings of the Marvel Universe. "I added, but I didn't make it up," he says flatly. "The idea of Iron Man was not mine. I didn't even have to know what he looked like—a guy in an iron suit—and then I would just write the story."

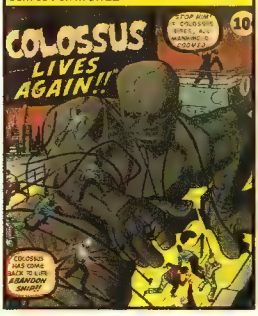
Some controversy lingers over exactly how these classic characters were conceived—by Lee or Kirby or both. Lieber can shed no light. "I was not with them," he professes. "It was not as if the three of us sat down and hashed it out. In those days, I hardly knew Jack. If Stan did it, he might have done it with Jack, or he might have just made it up himself and given it to me and I sent it to Jack. I don't think he gave me any drawing of Thor at all. The only part I remember is getting a synopsis about the characters, having to write the story and knowing Kirby needed work. I did not even know that these things were going to get their own books. I thought, 'Oooh, they're trying something a little new, or else they've run out of monsters and this is another thing that will just be for a while.' "

Ironically, this was the time that Lee began expressing dissatisfaction with Lieber's writing. After scripting the first dozen exploits of Ant-Man, Thor and the Human Torch in *Strange Tales*, as well as Iron Man's origin in *Tales of Suspense*, Lieber was abruptly replaced by outside writers, whom Lee quickly fired in turn. After that, Lee himself took over these strips, often reinventing them. This was when Ant-Man became Giant-Man and Iron Man first donned his now-classic red-and-gold armor. It was also the beginning of the Marvel method of writing, where the artist draws from a plot, not a script. The exploding Marvel Universe made the method a necessity if Lee was to keep up without his brother's help.

For his part, Lieber began writing and drawing backup fantasy stories for all those titles, inaugurating the "Tales of the Watcher" and "Tales of the Wasp" features. It was his first true taste of telling his own stories, and he wanted more.

"Somewhere along the line there were the Westerns," he says. "Kirby was drawing them, but for some reason he stopped, and I took on the Westerns. There was a period where I wanted to get back to drawing, so they

"STAN LEE IS MY BROTHER, THAT'S HOW I CAME TO WORK FOR THEM," EXPLAINS LIEBER, WHO SCRIPTED COUNTLESS MONSTER, ROMANCE, WESTERN AND SUPERHERO COMICS FOR MARVEL.




Art: Jack Kirby/Jack Ayers

The HUMAN TORCH MEETS PASTE-POT PETE!
YOUR CAREER IS FINISHED, FLAME-CONFINED TO A JAR!
SO! SO, THINK YOU DON'T NEED THE REST OF THE ROCKET? YOU'LL BE BUT A SMALL PUFF OF SMOKE ALONE ARE YOU? WELL, YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT JUST HOW DIFFERENT YOU BLAZING SHALL BE!
PLOT: STAN LEE • SCRIPT: LARRY LIEBER • ART: JACK KIRBY • INKING: DICK AYERS • LETTERING: A. SIMEK

MARVEL'S '60S COMICS HAD THEIR GOOFY SIDE, AND LIEBER WAS IN THE THICK OF IT, SCRIPTING THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF PASTE-POT PETE, "MASTER CRIMINAL."

Art: Jack Kirby/Dick Ayers

"JACK KIRBY WAS SO FAST!" EXCLAIMS LIEBER, WHO SCRAMBLED TO PROVIDE THE PROLIFIC PENCILLER WITH MATERIAL TO DRAW.

Art: Jack Kirby/Dick Ayers

gave me *The Rawhide Kid* to do."

A new version of a 1950s Western character, the Lee-Kirby Rawhide Kid was a pint-sized, redheaded hellion modeled after Steve McQueen. Starting with *Rawhide Kid* #42 (October 1964), Lieber reshaped the character, making him taller and more thought-

WHERE WILL YOU GO, JOHNNY? WHAT WILL BECOME OF YOU?
I DON'T KNOW! MAYBE IT DOESN'T MUCH MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO --A FUGITIVE!
IT MATTERS, JOHNNY...FROM THIS DAY ON, IT MATTERS...

"YOU'RE ACTUALLY GOOD AT WRITING ROMANCE," LEE TOLD LIEBER, WHO WROTE THE TRAGIC STORY OF RAWHIDE KID, A LONELY MAN WANTED FOR CRIMES HE DIDN'T COMMIT.

Art: Larry Lieber/Vince Colletta

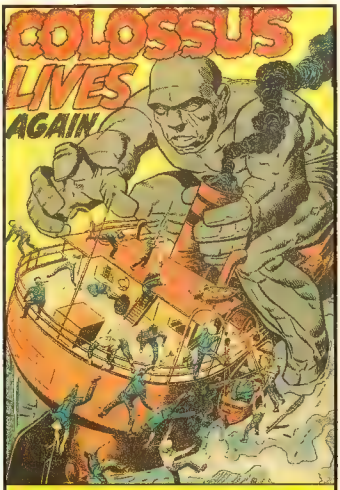
ful. It was a turning point in his career.

"I started leaving Stan in a sense when I took on the Westerns," he explains. "I took *Rawhide Kid* on to draw it, but I also wrote it. I had an advantage with the Westerns, because they were not very important books. They didn't make a lot of money. No matter what you did, it didn't seem to matter, so nobody was watching me carefully. That gave me a chance to learn, and at that point I started studying other writers. A lot of stuff by Rod Serling, including a TV western called *The Loner* with Lloyd Bridges. It was beautifully written. I loved *The Twilight Zone*. Stirling Silliphant did a lot of *Route 66*. I used to copy down lines of dialogue that I thought were magnificent. I was inspired by him, Serling and Paddy Chayefsky. Serling's dialogue lines were like knock-out punches. Not a word wasted. I learned from them and I learned from Stan that writing isn't just describing."

Surprisingly, Lieber deliberately steered away from aping the infectious Stan Lee style of scripting. "When he came out with *Spider-Man*, Stan was developing the Marvel style of writing, and it was his own personality," Lieber observes. "I didn't want to go in that direction. It just wasn't my cup of tea. Stan didn't care. It did not have to read like an imitation of him. He only wanted it to be well-written. When I would sit down to write, I would make believe I was Rod Serling, or I would be thinking of Stirling Silliphant. If you remember the *Rawhide Kids*, I wrote them that way. They were the only books that were not written in the Marvel style. I was writing it like I was writing the screenplay for *High Noon*. I remember 'The Last Gunfight,' where a gunfighter wants to retire and the only way he can do it is to get into a fight with the Rawhide Kid and have the Kid kill him. He wanted to go out that way."

Lieber's *Rawhide Kid* lasted some eight years, making it one of the longest single-book runs for a writer/artist at Marvel. He also wrote *The Two-Gun Kid* for a while. It was his favorite time in comics, and he admits to a strong Kirby influence in his still-developing art style.

"I tried to get as much as I could




LIEBER POINTS OUT THAT KIRBY'S MONSTER WORK FREED HIM TO EXAGGERATE HIS FIGURES TO HEROIC PROPORTIONS. "HIS STYLE BECAME ANGULAR STRONG AND SIMPLIFIED."

Art: Jack Kirby/Dick Ayers

Design & Layout: Michael Stewart

from Kirby, because I thought Kirby was wonderful. I saw in Jack a kind of beauty. Some people didn't like his stuff because it was very exaggerated. But if he drew rocks, he made them interesting. There was such simplicity and design. He designed everything. I tried to learn what I could. As a matter of fact, years later I drew more like him. I was doing covers for Marvel and they all had a Kirby look. One day Jim Steranko came into the office, looked at my stuff and he came out with a line: 'Well, there's only one Jack Kirby and that's Larry Lieber.' And, he walked out. I guess I was flattered. It was cute."

Having scripted the bulk of Kirby's pre-superhero stories, Lieber's insights into Kirby's artistic development are interesting. "I have a theory about Kirby," he says. "If you look at the early books, Jack draws in more or less a normal style. As he was doing these monsters, particularly when he did Colossus, where he had to draw this creature of stone, it's almost as if to make him look like stone, he had to draw it in a different way. If you look at Colossus and Kirby's later style, they're similar. His style became angular and strong and simplified. After a while, his people were slowly becoming like the stone—more like the monster. I often thought that maybe it had started because of all the monsters he was doing, which gave him such leeway to draw that way."

After *Rawhide Kid*, Lieber jumped ship to Martin Goodman's new comic company, Seaboard-Atlas, this time as an editor. It's a subject he doesn't care to dwell upon.

"How can I say it delicately without going into it? He hired me to do what I didn't know how to do, which was to handle black-and-white comics, for some reason. I had never worked in black-and-white before. He hired a guy from Warren, Jeff Rovin, who had never worked on color comics to handle color comics. Now, that was a bad decision. It didn't work out well. There were ill feelings. Jeff finally left in a huff and I had to take over his books. When I took over his books, I tried to bring whatever I knew from the years that I had been in the business to it, but I think it was too late then. Goodman had lost so much money that he finally had to give up the business."

After Seaboard, Lieber returned to the fold. At Marvel, he drew covers and inventory stories, toiling in the British reprint department. Once again, he found himself collaborating with his big brother, this time drawing Lee's *Incredible Hulk* newspaper strip for King Features. Eventually, Lee allowed him to take it over completely while he focused on the companion *Spider-Man* strip.

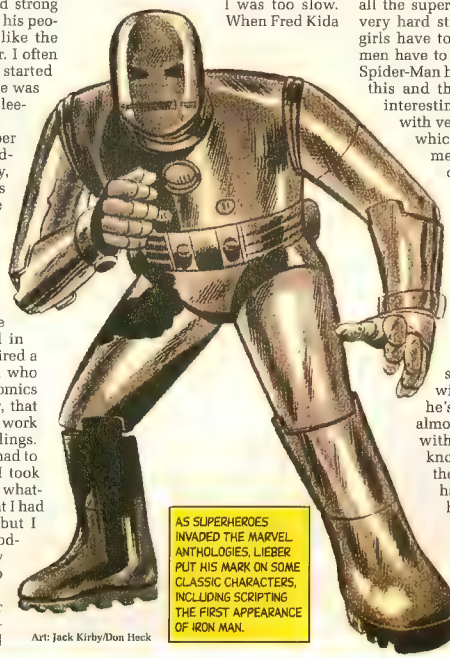
"Maybe *The Hulk* wasn't doing so well, or Stan couldn't devote himself to it, but at some point he told me I could write *The Hulk*. I then enjoyed it even more because I enjoy my own writing. Here and there I would get praise for a story that meant so much to me."

Eventually, the strip folded. About the same time, Marvel abolished its British department. Lieber was at loose ends.

"In the meantime, *Spider-Man* went on and on and on," Lieber recalls. "John Romita did it, then Fred Kida did it. Kida then wanted to retire and I had tried to do the dailies of *Spider-Man* but I was too slow. When Fred Kida retired, I said to Stan, 'Let me try it again.' This time I wasn't slow; I had gotten better and I started doing the pencils."

LIEBER TAUGHT FANS EVERYWHERE NEVER TO MISUNDERSTAND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ANTS.
HE MISUNDERSTOOD THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ANTS! HE DIDN'T KNOW THAT THE ANTS DO NOT CONSIDER THEMSELVES MY HELPLESS SLAVES! THEY REGARD THEMSELVES AS MY FRIENDS...AND MY PARTNERS IN THE WAR AGAINST CRIME!

Art: Jack Kirby/Dick Ayers

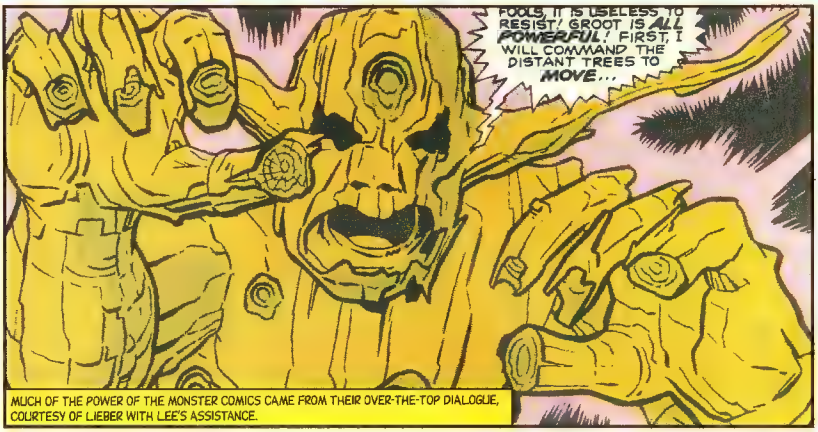


AS SUPERHEROES INVADED THE MARVEL ANTHOLOGIES, LIEBER PUT HIS MARK ON SOME CLASSIC CHARACTERS, INCLUDING SCRIPTING THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF IRON MAN.

Art: Jack Kirby/Don Heck

Even with all his comics experience, Lieber finds drawing the strip a continual challenge. "I'm trying to draw it as though I was doing a romance strip. But then I have to have all the superhero stuff. I think it's a very hard strip to do because your girls have to be very attractive, the men have to be handsome, and then Spider-Man has to be on the walls and this and that. You try to make it interesting and you're working with very little. I use thin lines, which they started off telling me would never reproduce, but they do and the syndicate leaves me alone with it. I'm working with a magnifying glass half the time."

All rumors to the contrary, Lieber verifies that Lee does indeed script King Features' *Spider-Man*. "Stan writes a very thorough script," he says. "What he didn't do with Kirby and the others, he's doing with me. It's almost the opposite. It's filled with descriptions. You know—the guy is leaving the room and with his left hand he's putting on his hat, and his right hand he's putting down the telephone, and the girl looks up sadly, etc. He's writing it like a movie script almost. In that sense, it can be confining but it also be very support-




MUCH OF THE POWER OF THE MONSTER COMICS CAME FROM THEIR OVER-THE-TOP DIALOGUE, COURTESY OF LIEBER WITH LEE'S ASSISTANCE.

Art: Jack Kirby/Dick Ayers

ive. I don't have to think of what's happening here and there. I'm just trying to do the best I can. I don't try to take shortcuts. I know what he's going for whenever he does it. He's trying to get a certain mood and I try to give it to him as much as I can."

As he looks back on his nearly 40-year career in comics, Larry Lieber sounds more bemused than anything else. "I was almost like a person who nobody knew existed," he says with no trace of unhappiness in his voice. "It was only when people got interested in comics history that they said, 'Hey, there's Larry Lieber. He was there too!' For the most part, I was left out of everything. In *Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics*, I'm only mentioned a couple of times. There isn't one example of my artwork. You wouldn't know I was an artist through the whole book."

Having collaborated with Lee for most of his writing career, one would think Lieber a fount of Stan Lee stories. The truth is startling. "The thing was, in a sense, I *never* knew Stan," Lieber admits. "He was nine years older than me. He had different friends. He was seldom around. I remember he took me to a movie once, to see *Pinocchio* downtown. It was an event. What I knew about him I learned mostly from my mother. I remember him coming home from the service on furlough. 'Ooh, my big brother—whoever he was.' I was like a fan in part, growing up that way."

The emotional distance doesn't get in the way of Lieber's appreciation of Lee's achievements, though. "I think Stan and Jack were the essential comic book people. When Stan wrote with Kirby, he gave you the essence of a comic. I don't think anybody did it better. I don't think anybody ever got the essence of drawing a comic better than Kirby.

"I feel like the guy in *Citizen Kane*—Bernstein," Lieber concludes, voice warming at the memory. "I went down to Marvel Comics two years ago for a Christmas party. They had it at some nightclub downtown, with lots of people. I walked in there and I felt, 'Oh my God. I remember the beginning.' The beginning was on 60th Street and Madison Avenue on the second floor of Magazine Management. Business was not good. As a matter of fact, when I started writing, I said to Martin Goodman, 'I'm thinking of my future. Tell me, how would you describe the comics industry?' He said, 'I would call it a dying industry.' It was just hanging on. They would put out these few books. Stan was there alone and he was making most of the art corrections himself. I don't know, I guess he had a chair. I don't want to make it sound too absurd, but it looked like a cubbyhole. He didn't even have a real office."

Looking back on those early days of Marvel Comics, simply doing the work is what Larry Lieber remembers best. "I would go up there and he would give me the synopsis and I would go home to my apartment in Tudor City or sit in the park and I would break it down with pictures. I considered myself to be learning, and I was just glad that somebody was drawing them."

"HE GAVE ME THE BASIC PLOT—A DOCTOR GOES INTO A CAVE AND FINDS A HAMMER," RELATES LIEBER OF THOR'S ORIGIN, WHICH HE SCRIPTED FROM A PLOT BY LEE.

Art: Jack Kirby/Dick Ayers

THESE DAYS, LIEBER IS STILL WORKING FOR HIS BROTHER, DRAWING THE DAILY SPIDER-MAN NEWSPAPER COMIC STRIP WHICH LEE SCRIPTS.

I'LL JUST COVER MY STREET CLOTHES WITH SOME STICKY WEBBING--
--AND LEAVE THEM TILL I RETURN, WHILE I WEB-SWING TO LUIGI BELGIOIS HOUSE!

Art: Larry Lieber

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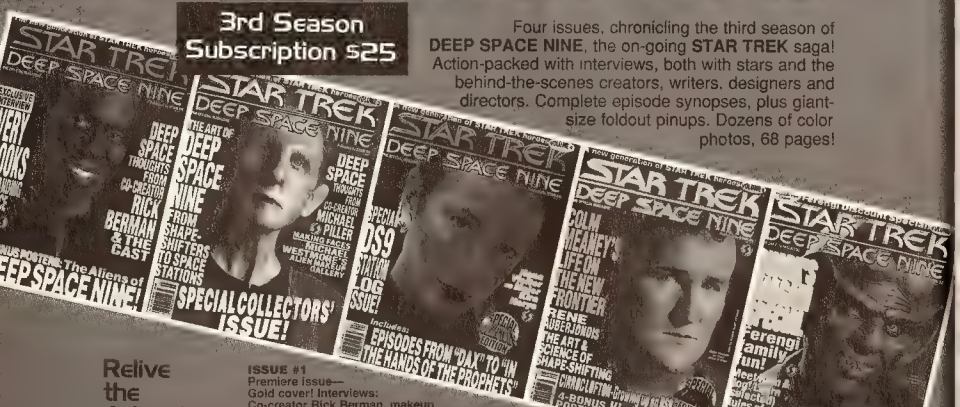
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# KING OF THE ACTION

By TOM WEAVER

***Slugging it out in serials, William Witney crafted some great comic-book cliffhangers.***

*Who was Hollywood's greatest [illegible] that could be very energetically debated, with top Hollywood names like Steven Spielberg, James Cameron, John Ford and many others in the running. In the crowded field of serial directors, however, there's a clear winner: The legendary William Witney, whose amazing cliffhanger career at Republic Pictures encompassed most of the greatest serials ever made—among them the Lone Ranger, Zorro and Dick Tracy chapterplays,* Drums of Fu Manchu, Adventures of Red Ryder *and* Captain Marvel, *the incomparable* Spy Smasher *and a baker's dozen more.*

*Born in Oklahoma in 1915, William Nuelsen Witney broke into the business in 1933 working at Mascot, the leading producer of low-budget serials. After Mascot and other small companies merged in 1935 to form Republic, Witney graduated to director (at 21, he was Hollywood's youngest). Witney teamed with director John English on many of the era's best serials, most of them highlighted by kinetic fight and chase scenes that helped change the face of action moviemaking. Retired from the business since the late '70s, Witney has turned his hand to writing, authoring a biography of famed movie horse Trigger in 1989, and more recently recounting his serial experiences in McFarland memoir,* In a Door, into a Fight, Out a Door, into a Chase.

**COMICS SCENE:** You've been appearing at conventions recently, so you must know how popular your serials and Westerns still are.

**WILLIAM WITNEY:** Well, not only here but abroad. [Film historian] Bill Everson took me to Europe in 1986 or

Selected Photos: Courtesy William Witney

**Whitney's first book, *Trigger Remembered* (1989), is available for $10 postpaid from Witney, 27058 Silver Drive, Pioneer, CA 95666. *In a Door, into a Fight, Out a Door, into a Chase*, Witney's new book about his serial years, is $32.95 postpaid from McFarland & Co, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640.**

Copyright 1941 Republic Pictures

there were sets that were in every episode, and I would shoot every master shot for every episode, one after another. That way the cameraman did not have to relight the set every time you pulled in and out. And, hell, they *appreciated* that. The only one that didn't appreciate it was the poor script clerk, "Buddy" Springsteen—R. G. Springsteen. He became a director during the War. In fact, *all* of my script clerks turned out to be damn good directors, every one of 'em—Tommy Carr, Tom McDougal and "Buddy" Springsteen. There were some girls that could have been good directors, but

'87. I guess we were gone four weeks; we visited six countries, and he showed a picture that I made called *Stranger at My Door* [1956]. There's a scene in it where a horse goes crazy and tries to kill everything that moves—it's probably the wildest horse action that will ever be photographed. In Paris, we showed it in a great big theater, and the place was just jammed. After the picture, they had a question-and-answer session, and somebody said, "That is a beautiful picture. How come we've never *heard* of you?" [*Laughs*] I said, "Well, let Bill Everson field *that* one!"

**CS:** Looking back at the serials you made, did anybody do them better than you and John English?

**WITNEY:** Well...no! Look, *we* had fun—we had a unit that was a fun deal. For one thing, we had a number of good writers on those things. Barry Shipman (who just passed away) and Norman Hall. *Drunk*, Norman was a better writer than 95 percent of the writers today! We had a guy named Sol Shor, who was very quiet but very efficient, and we had a bunch of screwballs like Rex Taylor. I loved them all.

**CS:** Who else would you want to single out for praise serial-wise?

**WITNEY:** Well, the producers had a hell of a lot to do with it. Producers like Hiram Brown Jr. and Larry Wickland, who gave me my start. Bill O'Sullivan produced a lot of them, too—he's still alive, I think, and he must be 190 years old! I haven't seen him for a long time—Bill and I never got along too good. But I admired the guy and I guess he admired *me*, because later I made some of his feature pictures which were damn good, like the one with Joan Evans and John Derek called *The Outcast* [1954].

**CS:** How was shooting a Republic serial different from shooting a feature?

**WITNEY:** I've always said that if anybody wanted to be a serial director, make sure you have good headlights on your car. You came to work in the dark and went *home* in the dark. And good kidneys helped, too [*laughs*]!

**CS:** How would you and John English split the responsibilities of directing?

**WITNEY:** Every other day we would work—I would work one day and then Jack would work the next, and on that day off, I would prepare. It was like a *mill*, and it was fun. We had a *great* crew, God! Great cameramen, no monkey business with 'em. We were a *unit* and there were never squabbles, never any problems. We would laugh and we tried to get everybody home by 6 p.m. if we could. (It didn't work out that way sometimes!) They came to work in the morning and they would work like a son of a bitch. When I pulled back into a long shot of a set, I would shoot the long shots for *every* sequence that took place in that room. In other words, women weren't considered in those days like they are now.

**CS:** It sounds like directing a serial is a hell of a lot of work for *two* directors. How did you manage to direct some of them *alone*?

**WITNEY:** Oh, they were harder. But there was a war coming on and I knew I was going. I mean, I wouldn't have stayed out of the War—hell, if there was excitement [*laughs*], I would just as soon be around it. I found out later I was wrong—I should have stayed away from it! It was rough, and...well, it's over now, why talk about it? [Witney served in a Marine combat photography unit.] I directed some of the serials alone, because I didn't want to break in another director. Things went so smoothly, and we never had any problem with anything. It was just a little more work. We had the same old crew,

Selected Photos: Courtesy Dan Scapperotti

Guard Photo: Copyright 1937 Republic Pictures

and they helped you along. Hell, without the crew, you couldn't have done it.

**CS:** What was John English like?

**WITNEY:** He was a cutter [editor] who came out of MGM, and we struck up an immediate friendship. In fact, Jack (before he died) was my little boy's godfather. He and his wife, Ralph [*Dick Tracy*] Byrd and Ralph's wife Virginia and me and my wife—we all ran around and partied together. That went on for *years*—Christmas and Easter and Halloween and *every*thing, there were six of us that always palled around.

**CS:** Is it true that you tended to direct the *out*door scenes and English would direct the *in*door?

**WITNEY:** It didn't make any difference. Jack called himself a "boudoir director," but he was as good an action director as I was. He just didn't *like* it. So, I did it. I remember one of the serials where he damn near burned the studio down, and from then on, I *knew* who was gonna shoot the fire sequences [*laughs*]! It was kind of fun—we were all young together. Hell, I started [directing] when I was 21.

**CS:** You had Bela Lugosi in one of your earliest serials, *SOS Coast Guard*.

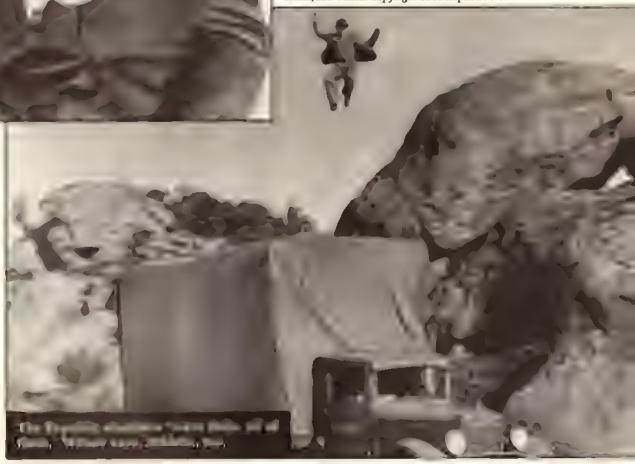
**WITNEY:** Bela was a very gentlemanly person, very quiet, and he had a thick accent. One day, it was 7 p.m. and we were all trying to go home, and Bela had a line, "Quick! Out the back door!" And he said, "Kvik! Out zee back*yard*!" I said, "It's door. *Door*." We did it again, and he said, "Kvik! Out zee back*yard*!" Well, that went on for about six takes. I said, "Once more now, Bela: *This* is a *door*," and I opened and closed it. And I said, "Bela, *you* open and close it. OK. Now, what *is* it?" He said, "A door." So, we started the camera again and it came out, "Kvik! Out zee backyard," again! I said, "Bela, what the hell's the matter with you?" and he said, "I got zee mental block!" [*Laughs*.]

But I have some nice memories of the man. He was married to a very charming lady who was with him most of the time, and everybody liked him. There was a little sequence we shot at [Port] Hueneme, which was a place where the old sailing ships used to come in. Bela was sitting there and sunning himself, and a lot of little Mexican kids from the packing houses made a big circle around him. They were all pointing at Bela and whispering. Finally, Bela crooked a finger to one kid and said, "Come here, son. I'd like to see your *thr-r-r-roat*." And with that, they all took off a thousand miles an hour [*laughs*]! He had a hell of a sense of humor!

**CS:** You also met your future wife on *SOS Coast Guard*, correct?

**WITNEY:** Yes, I did. She was an actress named Maxine Doyle and she co-starred with Byrd and Lugosi in that thing, and there's a whole chapter in the book about that which is gonna make you laugh—we didn't get along very good to start with! That marriage lasted for 37 years—she died in 1973. We had a very happy marriage and we had one son who's now in rescue work.

**CS:** The locations, and the photography, added to the Republic serials' appeal.



Crime, Inc. Photo: Copyright 1941 Republic Pictures

**WITNEY:** The cameramen—oh, what a bunch! The first cameraman I worked with was Bill Nobles, and what a doll of a guy! Just one peach of a person! He taught me more about directing than anybody else in the world, 'cause he came out of the old silent days. Then, we worked with Reggie Lanning—Reggie was a pro, and so was Bud Thackery, a very personal friend of mine. They knew more about film and cameras than these guys, these *kids* today. They don't know their work, they don't know what they're doing.

**CS:** What kind of money were you making as a serial director?

**WITNEY:** My contract started at $75 a week. But, I'll tell you, I saved more

Dogs Photos: Copyright 1938 Republic Pictures Design & Layout: Freddy Collado

The mask and cape were worn by the villain (the Lightning), not the hero, of Witney's SF serial *The Fighting Devil Dogs*.

money at $75 a week in those days than I could save at $1,000 a week later on!

**CS:** How did you enjoy working with all of the stuntmen in these serials?

**WITNEY:** Oh, God, they were dolls, all of them. Yakima Canutt was the main one that started me into the business—Yak and I were real good friends. Kenny Cooper is a name that doesn't mean anything to you, I'll bet, but Kenny was invited every year to go back there with him and sit in the pits. And, I'm a son of a bitch, every year something came up and I couldn't make it. He was killed, strangely enough, in a fight on a boat—he hit his head on an iron stanchion and it killed him. Then, of course, there was Dave Sharpe, one of my real good friends, and Jimmy Fawcett, one of the *top* guys. He was the

Witney (reluctantly) returned to the Republic serial mill to supervise *The Crimson Ghost*'s skullduggery.

Ghost Photos: Copyright 1946 Republic Pictures

doubled Gene Autry in all his early pictures. Kenny was World Champion Cowboy three or four times, like Yak, and they were as close as any two people could be. Another stuntman was Louis Tomei, a race car driver who drove Indianapolis [the 500 race], and I first guy who came off of a balcony onto a table.

**CS:** You had in your serials a number of actors and actresses that went on to be stars, among them Carole Landis, Jennifer Jones and George Montgomery.

**WITNEY:** Carole Landis [*Daredevils of the Red Circle*], God Almighty, what a figure! She had the most beautiful figure I'd ever seen on a girl, and she was a swell person with a hell of a sense of humor. There was a New York columnist who said about her, "She looks like one of those ornate French bureaus with the top drawer pulled out." [*Laughs*] Jennifer Jones [*Dick Tracy's G-Men*] was...clumsy, and not a very good actress. Her husband at that time, Robert Walker, worked in the serial, too, I think, and I said, "Gee, *there's* a kid that might go a long way!" Jennifer Jones' daddy owned a bunch of theaters in Oklahoma—Isley was her real last name—and I think that's how [Republic president] Herbert Yates picked her out. But Jack English didn't like her. I said, "Jack, you put that girl in *Orphans of the Storm* with those eyes and, she has it made!" She was out of the business for a couple of years after that—I think she got pregnant and went home—and then she came back, and you know the rest. George Montgomery started as an extra—he stood in for Ralph Byrd in the *Dick Tracys*.

**CS:** Who were some of the serial actors who didn't go on to stardom—but you think *should* have gone further?

**WITNEY:** Well, I think Ralph Byrd should have, and Kane Richmond [*Spy Smasher*], too. He was a swell guy—a *real* nice person. In fact, most of the leading men were pretty damn good. Tom Neal [*Jungle Girl*] was a hell of a good actor and a nice guy—I thought—and, God, he later went to jail for killin' his wife! I also think that Bob Livingston [*The Lone Ranger Rides Again*] should have made it—he had been under contract to MGM, and I think they let him go because he looked too

Satan Photo: Copyright 1940 Republic Pictures

much like Bob Taylor. (And Bob Livingston was a better actor!) And there were some other leading men that should have gone further—I liked 'em all. They would walk in, and if they looked like [stuntman] Davey Sharpe [who would be doubling them], they had a part!

**CS:** Among the leading ladies? Which ones were "game," ready to do anything?

**WITNEY:** Most of 'em were. Carole Landis did a good job—she had a big part in *Daredevils in the Red Circle* and she "wore" very well. My *favorite* was *Jungle Girl*'s Frances Gifford. Oh, God, she was a good actress, she was a *lady* and she was *beautiful*. She was a sexy gal. You know, these leading ladies took a beating—they came up with bruises and black-and-blue marks, but none of 'em ever complained. They were all good sports.

**CS:** Do you have a favorite among the serials you did?

**WITNEY:** *Drums of Fu Manchu, that's* my favorite. We had fun making that. It was a good story, and we had some very different gags in it. The guy who played Fu Manchu just recently died. I'm speaking of my wife Beverly's love, Henry Brandon [STARLOG #114]. We were in New York several years ago and she fell in love with him. Nicest person God ever made. What a job he did in *Drums of Fu Manchu*!

**CS:** Did you have a favorite type of serial? Did you like, say the superheroes better than the jungle serials, or the jungles better than the Westerns?

**WITNEY:** Naaah. They were just a day's work, and I didn't really care.

**CS:** When serial fans are asked to name the best-ever serial, they often name *Adventures of Captain Marvel*.

**WITNEY:** Uhhhhh...well, it was *interesting*. I *guess* it was a good serial—I don't know. We didn't have any trouble with it at all, we had everything pretty well worked out. We made a couple of Captain Marvel dummies up, to sail down wires in the flying scenes. The only time I've ever seen a horse make a double-take was on *Captain Marvel*, when we slid that dummy down the wire. We had the dummy chasing a guy on a horse, and it looked so damn real. Another horse was grazing and he heard the dummy, it made a humming sound as it came down the wire. The horse looked up and he watched it fly over his head, and then he went back to grazing. He took one more bite and then suddenly he reared up and ran like hell [*laughs*]! That's what's called a "late take"!

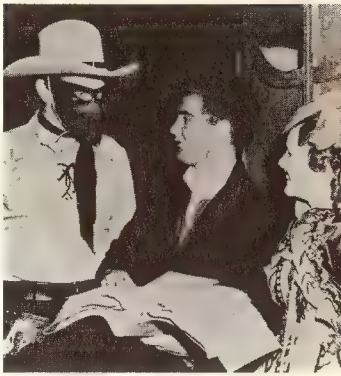
**CS:** After directing or co-directing 23 serials, you went into the service in the early '40s.

**WITNEY:** I went in when I was 27 and was gone for five years. And things had changed when I came back—boy, what a difference! Other people had taken over, and [the changes] made a bum out of me. I didn't *want* anything after that. At one time or another, I had a little ambition, but after that—I *played*. I've always flown, I loved to fly (I've owned a lot of airplanes), and I love my horses. They were more important to me than the [movie] work. The work came so easy that it was a sideline [*laughs*]!

Master Photo: Copyright 1961 AIP

**"Beautiful sets" and the "great" Vincent Price enhanced Witney's *Master of the World*.**

Ranger Photo: Copyright 1938 Republic Pictures



**Who is that Masked Man? Director Witney (center) and leading lady Lynne Roberts check the script for answers.**

**CS:** You only made one more serial after getting out of the service, *The Crimson Ghost*. Did you want to get back into the serials?

**WITNEY:** They put me back into the serials, but I didn't want to go—it's a long story why. Frankly, I didn't know *what* I wanted to do. But I had to *eat*! I went from a hell of a good salary [as a director] to $225 a month as a second lieutenant [*laughs*]—there was quite a difference! So, I did that one last serial, *The Crimson Ghost* with Linda Stirling, who was nice. Then, Eddie White, who produced all the Roy Rogers pictures, picked me up, because I had done him a favor before the War (I made what I think is his first picture). Eddie and I needed writers, and one day an agent came in and said, "There's a writer named Sloan Nibley who just got out of the service and he needs a job." That was good enough for me. I said, "Send him over, he's got it."

In the meantime, I had invited Linda Stirling to go to a dog show. (I used to raise German shepherds, English setters and St. Bernards.) I invited Sloan, too. They both came out to the house and we started to drink champagne, and we never got to the dog show [*laughs*]! Then, I went away on location about three weeks later and said to Sloan, "Have you seen Linda? You seemed to hit it off very well." And he said, "Yeah, I see her every day. We got *married*!" That lasted a hell of a long time, and they had two kids.

**CS:** In the 1950s, one of the things you did was direct some of the teenage pictures for AIP. Were they an interesting change of pace?

**WITNEY:** No. Pictures are pictures.

**CS:** Did you have much contact with

company heads Jim Nicholson and Sam Arkoff?

**WITNEY:** I knew them both and they were both very nice people. I remember that Nicholson was on the set most of the time during *Master of the World*, but Arkoff stayed at home. Arkoff never swore or anything, and on one of the pictures, he got so goddamned mad one day, he turned red in the face and he shook, he shook and he said, "Oh—*defecation*!" [*Laughs*] Christ, I fell on the floor!

**CS:** How did you get involved on *Master of the World*?

**WITNEY:** I made three or four pictures for these guys [AIP], and after I finished *The Bonnie Parker Story* [1958], they had a commitment for another picture from me. They forgot about it—until my agent reminded them. (They would have had to pay me if they didn't use me.) The very next day I got a call from them [*laughs*], and they sent me a script called *Master of the World*!

**CS:** AIP publicity claimed that some of the process shots were shot over the East Coast, others over Ireland's coast.

**WITNEY:** A cameraman and myself went up in the High Sierras and shot *all* the process plates, just the cameraman, and the helicopter pilot and me.

guy Warrenton took up all my time! The first morning, I looked at this hallway set and Warrenton said, "I'm ready." I said, "*You* might be ready, Gil, but *I'm* sure not. Look, this is a fantasy picture—I want green lights and flashing bulbs and things happening here." Warrenton said, "I don't see anything in the script like that," and I said, "Well, I don't give a shit what you see! It's gotta *be* that way, or I don't wanna *play*." So, Nicholson got into it, and he said, "Gee, I never thought of that, but that sounds like a hell of an idea." Christ, we had a science-fiction picture, we were in color—*use the color*! I guess the picture turned out pretty good—I've never seen it. I saw a couple of cuts on it, but the miniatures hadn't been put in.

**CS:** Richard Matheson, the screenwriter, said you had "a demeaning attitude about the whole project," and that you weren't suited to direct it. Do you remember working with him?

**WITNEY:** Yeah, we went through the script and I had a lot of changes I wanted. I didn't have any argument or anything with him. That's the only contact I had with him. I don't know if he was happy with the picture or not.

**CS:** He didn't have very many nice things to say about *Master of the World*. You were one of the *people* he had nothing nice to say about.

**WITNEY:** Well, that's OK with me, because the picture was made in 15 days. And when you make a 15-day picture, it's a 15-day picture [*laughs*]!

**CS:** What was it like, working with Vincent Price on *Master of the World*?

**WITNEY:** *Great.* What a gentleman!

**CS:** Charles Bronson?

**WITNEY:** Bronson had only starred in one or two other pictures at that time. He was very quiet, and I had no trouble with him at all. He had some ideas how he wanted to do things, and they were all right, so why should I argue with him?

**CS:** And Henry Hull?

**WITNEY:** Well, he stayed sober. (*Fairly* sober, let's put it that way [*laughs*]!) But a delight. All those old actors that "trod the boards," Jesus, they were delightful people. There was no bullshit with 'em. *Now* the kids say, "I won't say this," "I don't wanna say that." In *those* days, you would say to an actor, "Go stand on your head in a corner and read the lines," and they would say, "Fine!" They were *actors*.

Legion Photo: Copyright 1939 Republic Pictures

**Arch-enemies Fu Manchu (Henry Brandon) and Nayland Smith (William Royle) nose-to-nose in Witney's favorite serial *Drums of Fu Manchu*.**

Fu Photo: Copyright 1940 Republic Pictures

**Zorro (Reed Hadley) prepares to unmask the perfidious Don del Oro in *Zorro's Fighting Legion*.**

We made the picture in about 15 days. How we did it in 15 days I don't know, because they gave me a cameraman [Gil Warrenton] that was so goddamned slow! He took all my time! Dan Haller was the art director on *Master of the World*—he was a hell of a nice guy and brilliant. He gave me the most beautiful sets on the process stage, and I didn't have time to shoot 'em—this

**CS:** *The Wild Wild West* was a TV series you would have been ideal for, but you only directed one or two episodes.

**WITNEY:** I did two of 'em. [Producer] Collier Young gave me a third script when I finished the second one, and I said, "Collier, you can take this script and shove it up your two leads' *ass*!" Apparently, he did, 'cause he quit right after that, too! Oh, I couldn't *stand* the sons of bitches!

**CS:** What didn't you like about Robert Conrad and Ross Martin?

**WITNEY:** Oh, shit, I could go into that for an *hour*. They were a couple of goddamned prima donnas: They would be late, they would hold things up. These were two of the first pictures that went on the air and they had an airdate on 'em, so we worked 'til midnight every

*(continued on page 62)*

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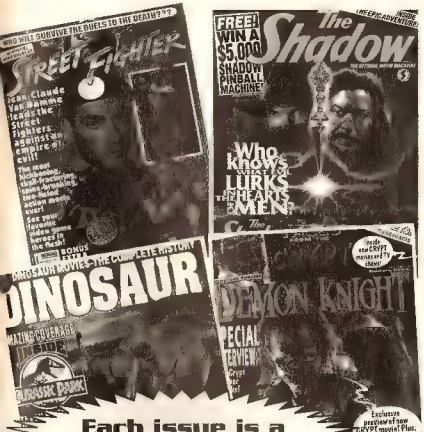


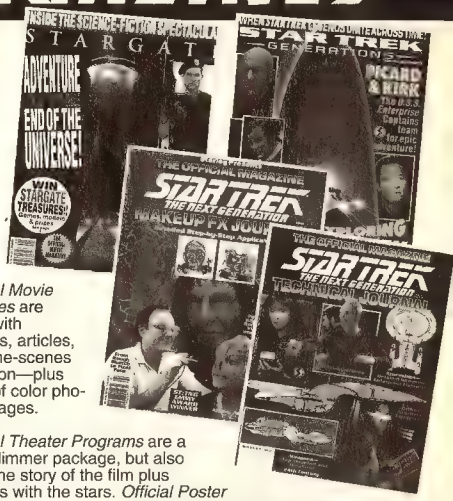


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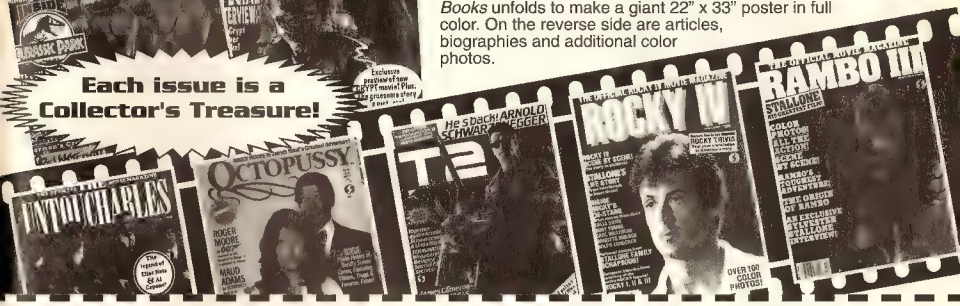


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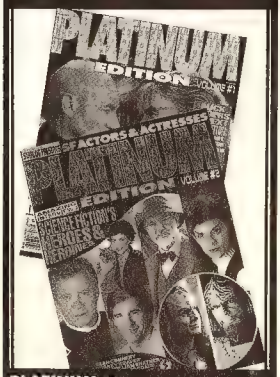


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# Witney

*(continued from page 60)*

night and then came back at 7 a.m. Bob would go back to his dressing room in between scenes, and Ross Martin—oh, he was a real prick as far as *I* was concerned. He didn't want to say *this*, he didn't want to say that—"This line doesn't mean anything"—and I'm tryin' to make a schedule!

The only time I laughed during the whole picture was the last day and the last shot, practically. We were inside, and Bob has to run through an explosion. Bob said to the special FX man, "Blow it right under me." And the FX man, who I knew—he was another ex-Marine—said, "I *can't* blow it right under you, you're the leading man. *You* know that, Bob!" And I said, "Give *me* the button!" Well, I caught him on the up-rise, and it blew him up in the air, up against a fence. He was laying there and I walked over and he looked up at me and I said, "Well, I'm a son of a bitch, I didn't *kill* you, did I?" He said, "No, but you sure blew me off my lifts!" That's the only time I laughed in the whole three weeks!

**CS:** Why did you leave the business?

**WITNEY:** Oh, I couldn't take the actors anymore. Plus the drugs, and all that stuff. We used to drink in the old days, but we could all do our work. Then, drugs came in—I had my first taste of it on a *Daniel Boone*. And I didn't want to work any more, I'd had it. The producers, they didn't know their jobs; the scripts were stinking. I decided it was time to quit. I had 50 years of it, that's enough!

**CS:** All this attention that you and your serials and your features are now receiving—how inconceivable would this have been to you, back in the days when you were knocking this stuff out?

**WITNEY:** I was considered a Western director. In the service, that would be the guy that swabs out the shithouse [*laughs*]! I never thought about it, I was never very "movie-conscious." I *saw* a lot of movies and I've been an avid reader all my life, but I never thought anything about these pictures. They were made for kids and they passed on. But now they've all come back.

I had a funny experience: One day about 10 years ago, I was up in front of an audience and one of the people said, "Mr. Witney, you must be very proud of the *art form* that you started in the serials." I said [*laughs*], " '*Art form*'? For Christ's sake, there was no 'art form' in those! A serial director was a guy who, if he could get a job, was lucky!" They got *mad* at me [*laughs*]—they really did! Davey Sharpe was at this thing, and Davey started to laugh, [stuntman] Tom Steele was there, and we *all* started to laugh. Everybody got mad at us! The "art form" of the serials—Jesus!

# Mask

*(continued from page 43)*

*The New Adventures of Felix the Cat.* Hartle's in-house staff is small but resourceful, and he credits them with "trying to crank out as much as they can." The crew includes Mary Moore and Sherina (from *Phantom 2040*) as his production manager and assistant, prop and model designer Drew Graybeal, storyboard artist Steve Lyons, background artist Gary Montalbano. Mark Howard, Nathan Chew and Cesar Magsombol design props, models and do storyboard fixes. The producer also relies on local freelance talent and the overseas production house, Cuckoo's Nest of Taiwan.

Hartle began his training at the Ivy School of Professional Art in Pennsylvania, which also taught animation courses. From there, he worked at Kensington Falls, The Animators and Anivision doing commercials for four years. He moved to Minnesota, where he worked for the Mike Jones Film Corporation (formerly Bajus-Jones). There he directed Mr. Clean and Captain Crunch spots.

In 1991, he moved to southern California to work on *Taz-Mania* for producer Art Vitello (CS #22), as a fourth-unit director. After directing several *Animaniacs* episodes, he moved to Film Roman, where he produced both seasons of *Mighty Max* and now, *The Mask*.

"It helped that I could animate, write the [exposure] sheets and time everything," he says. "It gave me a well-roundedness.

"In the industry now, there's not a whole lot of animation being done here. It's all being done overseas. People who are coming up are really getting robbed of [knowing how the entire animation process is done]. It's not that we have to do it *all* over here, but we should have an ongoing training system for new people, so someone doesn't say, 'I don't understand what you're talking about.' That sometimes happens. That's why studios will get someone who has come up through an animation commercial house, or from a feature division with the knowledge to talk to all the different departments at their level. That way they'll know what you want. That's one of the reasons why, when I first came here, I got as far as I did."

With his experience and crack staff, Gary Hartle believes *The Mask* will be a wild, entertaining ride. "When you think of *our* version of *The Mask*, think of *The Graduate*. Everyone here is a loony tune. Somebody's a screwball to some degree, and basically, Stanley is our 'Graduate' character that everything happens to. He's pretty much the only normal guy in *The Mask*." CS

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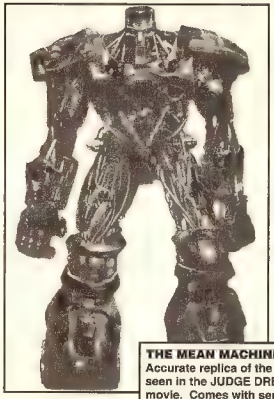

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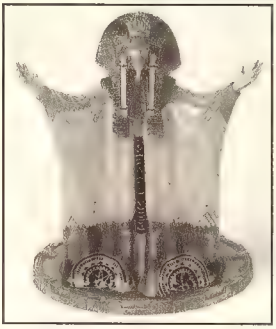

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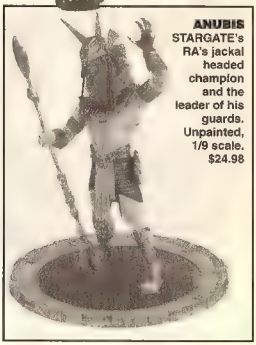

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# Alaskey

*(continued from page 27)*

against *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *Goof Troop*, which was too tall an order for the little green duck! We were done in by the time slot."

He's pleased with his web-footed alter-ego. "I feel so close to Plucky, it's hard to put in words," Alaskey confides. "I was so proud to get that job and be their version of a young Daffy. I strove to do a close interpretation of the Warners' ducks; Plucky is the same as Daffy as far as emotions go. It was also the first cartoon job I went out for. I'm the only man alive to get a contract at Warner Bros. for voice work. It's a nice arrangement and I would never say no to doing Plucky!"

In *Casper*, moviegoers don't just hear Alaskey, they see him as well. "I've got two parts in *Casper*," he reveals. "I'm Stinkie and I also have a small on-camera part as 'Mr. Peters'—a guy who owns a TV set which Casper uses as a transportation device. You will also get to see what I look like.

"Stinkie's sort of on-camera, too—he's in a photo at one point. You'll have to look real quick for a turn-of-the-century photo showing the Ghostly Trio before they became ghosts. As Stinkie, I worked in all kinds of gestures and expressions that the animators could use."

ILM utilized the Ghostly Trio's actors to give the ghosts facial expressions. "We've been videotaped since day one of this movie, just to see how we work. Every time we open our mouths, a videotape is running to catch our gestures and expressions. All that footage will be reviewed by the animation team for the best moments to be incorporated into our characters.

"In fact," he says happily, "when we took a trip up to ILM, the animators went as far as to try a new technique where photographic light cells were taped to our faces on the muscles. I had 40 little silver dots on my face and they filmed us with an infrared camera just to get our expressions when we smiled, spoke and made faces. We also had a nice long session with the animators to give them a feel for the characters. It's coming to life, so to speak.

"And I can't stress enough what a visual picture *Casper* is—the sets, the look, the feel, the FX are all mind-boggling," he promises. "It's as if a Victorian haunted mansion had been transplanted here to Burbank!

"I was brought up on the Universal Monsters," Joe Alaskey says with a grin, as he stares out at the vast expanse of the Universal Studios backlot. "Like every other kid, I always wanted to *be* one of those monsters. Now all I can say is, 'Kids: be careful what you wish for!' "

# Autographed Comics

## Collector's Treasures!

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Batman #500 Deluxe Edition. Signed by artists Joe Quesada and Kevin Nowlan. Comes in two-sided portfolio with Comic Talk #7. $70

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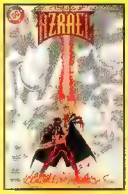


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**AVAILABLE BUT NOT SHOWN:** Superman: Return to Metropolis Set. Includes Action #692 signed by artist Denis Rodier, and The Adventures of Superman #505, signed by Tom Grummett, packaged in a two-sided portfolio. $50

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## AUTOGRAPHED COMICS

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# ANIMATION SCENE

Simpsons Art: Matt Groening/Fox

## Things That Go Boom

**Real Aftershock:** After the Federal Building in Oklahoma City was bombed on April 19, the networks have reevaluated their policies on the use of explosions on Saturday morning. The reason? They're concerned about traumatizing impressionable young minds. A story editor on one of ABC's newer shows notes that the network is not allowing *any* explosions. However, an ABC spokesman said, in a generally worded statement, that since 1985, the network has carefully edited explosions and other violent acts from their children's programming. The ABC spokesman denied that the recent Oklahoma City bombing had any impact on ABC's Standards & Practices policies.

On Fox, a Broadcast Standards spokesman promised that incidental explosions will be allowed and nothing will be edited; however, you won't see any episodes with bombs being planted. Such stories—"Riddler's Reform" from *Batman: The Animated Series* and an episode of *Eek! The Cat*—have been "temporarily" pulled from the schedule.

A CBS publicist said that the head of children's programming, Judy Price, was "unavailable." This raises further questions: Why is the network afraid to comment on the matter? Is CBS ashamed of their policy? Nonetheless, a producer of a CBS action-adventure series says explosions have *not* been prohibited. Yet.

Saturday morning TV: Sanitized for your protection.

**Disney Wins the Lion's Share:** Here's a list of awards garnered by Disney this year:

The 52nd Annual Golden Globe Awards were held January 21 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. *The Lion King* won three awards: Best Musical or Comedy Film; Best Original Song: "Can You Feel the Love Tonight?" music by Elton John, lyrics by Tim Rice; and Best Original Score: Hans Zimmer.

The 18th International Angel Awards were held February 9 at the Radisson Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. *The Lion King* won an "Angel" for its artistic excellence, moral, spiritual and social values.

The 37th Annual Grammy Awards were presented March 1. Best Pop Male Vocal: Elton John, "Can You Feel the Love Tonight?"; Best Musical Album for Children; Best Spoken Word Album for Children: *Lion King Read-Along*; Best Instrumental Arrangement with Vocals: Hans Zimmer, Lebo M., Andre Crouch for "Circle of Life."

Chicago Film Critics, March 13: Zimmer: Best Musical Score.

At their 67th annual presentation on March 27, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences gave *The Lion King* two Oscars: Best Original Score, Zimmer, and Best Song, "Can You Feel the Love Tonight?" by John and Rice. This marks the *fourth* double-win by Disney in these categories, previously achieved by *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty & the Beast* (1991) and *Aladdin* (1992).

**The Latest *Anime*:** New from Streamline is the first Lupin III theatrical feature, *The Mystery of Mamo* (1978), directed by Yasuo Ootsuka (also, Otsuka), produced by Tokyo Movie Shinsha. Orion Home Video retails this English-dubbed, 102-minute volume for $29.98. Contains nudity and sensual situations; recommended for mature audiences.

*The Crimson Wolf* (1994) is a 60-minute OVA directed by Shoichi Masuo, based on the Japanese comic book *Hong Lang* by Masahiko Takasho and Kenji Okamura. It's a blend of eroticism,sorcery, martial arts and international intrigue, retailing for $29.98.

**Meet Sharon Apple, the computer-generated singing sensation who's evolving beyond man's control in *Macross Plus*, Volume 2.**

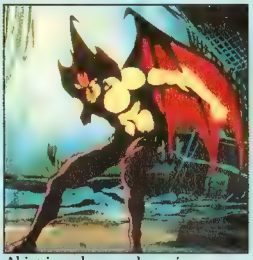
The four volumes of *Babel II* (1992) are available for $9.98 per 30-minute episode. The series was created by Gigantor creator Mitsuteru Yokoyama.

Streamline's videos are produced and directed by Carl Macek.

**The Return of Casshan:** *Shinzo Ningen Casshan*, produced by Tatsunoko Production Co., Ltd., was originally a 35-episode series broadcast weekly from October 2, 1973 through June 25, 1974. In 1993, the studio produced a remake that condensed the story into four parts, updated for the 1990s.

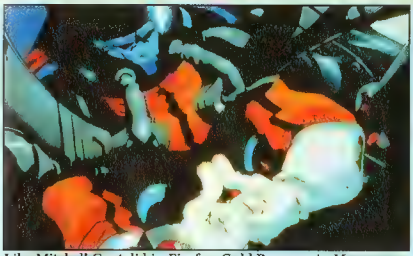
The hero, Casshan, sacrifices his humanity to combat the Neoroids, an army of androids who wish to enslave mankind. Ironically, his father is the one who created the androids.

*Casshan: Robot Hunter* had its U.S. broadcast premiere on the Sci-Fi Channel in May. Adapted by Streamline Pictures and distributed by Orion Home Video, the four-volume OVA series retails for $9.98 per 30-minute episode. The designs are by Yasuomi Umetsu, the character designer of *Megazone 23, Part II* and *Lily-C.A.T.*



**Akira is such a popular *anime* name that it also the lead character's moniker in *Devil Man*.**

**Manga *Anime*-tion:** *Devil Man* (Volume 1, "The Birth" and 2, "Demon Bird" is the *nom de plume* of a high school kid named Akira, who must attain the body and strength of a demon to combat a race of demons bent on world domination. Manga Entertainment retails the 55-minute videos for $14.95 each, dubbed in English. Watch out for some graphic horror.



**Like Mitchell Gant did in *Firefox*, Guld Bowman in *Macross Plus* flies a thought-controlled fighter jet.**

*Macross Plus*, Volume 2 begins with the concert of Sharon Apple, the galaxy's hottest singing sensation—who happens to be computer-generated. But she's evolving beyond human control, and becomes jealous of her programmer Myung, who's attracted to maverick test pilot Isamu Dyson. Meanwhile, jealousies flare between Isamu and rival pilot Guld Bowman, and they duke it out in their transforming fighters. In Volume 3, Isamu recovers from his injuries, while Sharon seeks to dispose of Myung permanently. The 40-minute videos, which retail for $14.95 dubbed, $24.95 subtitled, contain explicit language and slight nudity. Volume 4, the conclusion, is due in October.

Graphic violence, explicit language, brief nudity and adult situations pervade *Ninja Scroll*, directed by Yoshiaki Kawajiri of *Lensman* fame. The 90-minute feature retails for $19.95 dubbed, $24.95 subtitled. Not for the squeamish.

**Future Cops:** Manga Entertainment's July releases are dominated by science-fiction police. Here's what's new:

*Patlabor the Movie*. In the year 1999, Tokyo's Mobile Police battle crime with robots called "Labors." The 118-minute feature is $19.95 dubbed, $24.95 subtitled.

*New Dominion Tank Police*, a three-volume OVA series, continues the saga of Japan's elite Tank Police, who fight against the mercenary Puma sisters, Anni and Uni, in the year A.D. 2100. The 60-minute videos contain two episodes each, and retail for $14.95 apiece. Volume 3's out in September.

*Angel Cop* is a six-volume OVA series in which Japan controls the world at the 20th century's end. The government forms the "Special Security Police"—the "SS"—which battles terrorists known as the Red May. The 30-minute episodes, English-dubbed, retail for $9.95. Volume 2 comes out in August, with subsequent volumes monthly thereafter.

**Central Park Media Releases:** *Dragon Knight: Another Knight on the Town* is the second adventure of Takeru, a fierce, not-so-noble swordsman who battles some bullies and rescues a child in a medieval village. This 50-minute video is subtitled, and retails for $34.95.

*Princess Minerva* is a crusading heroine in the kingdom of Wisler who must deal with a tournament of warrior women, and the kidnapping of her loyal bodyguard, Blue Morris, by the evil sorceress Dynastar. The 45-minute video is subtitled, and retails for $29.95.

Monsters Art: Klasky-Csupo

***Aaahh!!! Real Monsters* has 26 new episodes joining the ranks. Don't be scared...**

Other kudos include the Charles M. Powell Award for the Best Marketed Film of 1994 by the Film Information Council, Best Animated Film by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association and Best Family Film (Special Category) by the National Board of Review.

With *Lion* winning the music categories in the major awards, this reinforces Disney's corporate belief that their animated films *have* to be musicals.

**Other Studios Can Win, Too:** Here's a list of awards won by non-Disney animated product:

At the Oscars, the Best Animated Short Film was *Bob's Birthday*, produced by Alison Snowden and David Fine, Snowden Fine Animation for Channel 4/National Film Board of Canada.

The 16th Annual Cable-ACE Awards were held January 15 at LA's Wiltern Theater. The winners were: Best Children's Programming Series (six and younger): *Madeline*, The Family Channel, DIC Animation City, Inc.; and Best Animated Programming Special or Series: *The Tale of Tom Kitten and Jemima Puddle-duck*, The Family Channel, TVC London.

The Genesis Awards, which recognize producers for raising public awareness of animal issues, held their ceremonies March 12 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. *The Simpsons* won an award for "Bart Gets an Elephant." Last year, the "Whacking Day" episode received the award. *The New Adventures of Captain Planet* won for TV Children's Programming: Ongoing Commitment.

The New York Festival awarded a Silver Medal to *The Simpsons* for Best Writing for a Series for "Deep Space Homer." "Tree House of Horror IV" won a Gold Medal for Best Soundtrack/Audiomix. The Chicago International Film Festival honored the same two episodes with the Silver Hugo Award for Best Situation Comedy.

**Animated Emmys:** The 22nd Annual Emmy Awards held ceremonies May 13 and 19, honored *Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego?* for Best Animated Children's Program. Lily Tomlin won for Best Performer in an Animated Program for *Scholastic's The Magic School Bus*. Best Achievement in Animation went to *Rugrats*, directed by Jim Duffy, Steve Socki, Howard E. Baker; written by Jonathan Greenberg, Peter Gaffney and Rachel Lipman.

*Disney's Aladdin* won three. Best Music Direction and Composition: Mark Watters, supervising composer; John Given, Harvey Cohen, Carl Johnson, Thom Sharp, composer. Best Film Sound Editing: John O. Robinson III, Michael Geisler, supervising sound editors; Marc S. Perlman, William Griggs, supervising music editors; Melissa Gentry-Ellis, Ray Leonard, Phyllis Ginter, Michael Gollom, Timothy J. Borquez, Thomas Jaeger, Charles Rychwalski, Gregory A. Laplante, Kenneth D. Young, Jenifer Mertens, sound editors; Robert Duran, William Koepnick, James C. Hodson, sound effects editors. Best Film Sound Mixing: Timothy J. Borquez, James C. Hodson, supervising re-recording mixer; Timothy Garrity, William Koepnick, Melissa Gentry-Ellis, re-recording mixers; Deborah Adair, production mixer.

**The ASIFA-East Animation Awards:** Held at the Donnell Library Auditorium in New York City, the winners were:

Best Film of 1995: *A Little Routine*, by George Griffin.

Charles Samu Award: *Whitewash*, by Michael Sporn.

Professional Films Over

**What A Cartoon! News:** Hanna-Barbera has now animated just over half of the 48 shorts for the Cartoon Network's World Premiere cartoon characters. Here's the latest batch of eight:

June 18 (premiere showing): Shake and Flick in "Raw Deal in Rome" (a.k.a. "When in Rome"), by Eugene Thomas. Flick, a flea, pesters a poodle named Shake in Rome. Layouts by Gavin Dell.

June 25: Captain Buzz Cheeply in "A Clean Getaway," by Canadian Meinert Hansen. Searching for an outer space laundromat, Captain Buzz Cheeply (Richard M. Dumont) and his robot sidekick Slide (Rick Jones) run into the Blubnoids (Paul Zakaib). He sells Slide, but he can't do his laundry without him, so he plans to get the robot back from the aliens. Announcer: George Morris.

July 2: O. Ratz in "Rat in a Hot Tin Can," by producer/director Jerry Reynolds of Perennial Pictures, Indianapolis. During the winter, skid row vermin O. Ratz (Harvey Korman) and

**When was the last time you saw a blue poodle? Well, check out "Raw Deal in Rome."**

Dave D. Fly (Marvin Kaplan) try to avoid trouble as they strive for "the good life." Woman: Nancy Dussault.

July 9: Pfish and Chip in "Short (Yet Sensitive) Phuse," by Rahn Thomas and Butch Hartman. Pfish, a land shark (Robert Picardo, *Star Trek: Voyager*'s Doctor) and Chip (Jeff Bennett), a Scottish lynx, have to dispose of the Mad Bomber's (Pat Fraley) bombs.

July 16: Fat Cats in "Drip Dry Drips," by Jon and Chris McClenahan of Startoons, Chicago. An Abbott and Costello-type duo is commissioned to clean the President's new suit. Elmo is voiced by Hank Azaria; Louie is Ken Hudson Campbell. President: Doug James.

July 23: "George and Junior's Christmas Spectacular," by Pat Ventura. Bears George (John Rubinow) and Junior (Tony Pope) fill in for Santa Claus (T.K. Carter), but can they get past Spike the pit bull (Carter)? Layouts by Mark Kausler, Andrew Bialk and Miles Thompson. Background stylists: Jonathon Goley and Kathryn Yelsa.

July 30: "Yoink of the Yukon," created by Jim Ryan, Jerry Eisenberg and Don Jurwich; directed by Eisenberg and Jurwich. In the Canadian northwest, a grizzly named Noof swipes fur coats from the Mounties to return them to the animals. Yoink of the Yukon must then, heroically, track him down. Yoink/Noof/Sergeant Farflung: Rob Paulsen; Captain/Soldier/Porcupine: Charlie Adler.

August 6: Yuckie Duck in "I'm on My Way," created, written and directed by Pat Ventura. Yuckie (Bill Kopp) returns as a paramedic who hurts more than he helps. Lion: Carter. Layouts: Kausler, Robert Ramirez, Thompson and Bialk. Backgrounds by Goley. Music by Peter Lurye.

Currently in production:

**There's no place like home, even when you're a "Rat in a Hot Tin Can," like O. Ratz.**

Melvin and Malcolm in "Tales of the City," by Ralph Bakshi. Malcolm, a jazz-playing cockroach, tries to keep a frustrated Melvin from committing suicide.

"Cow and Chicken," written and directed by David Feiss. Siblings Cow and Chicken contend with the Devil (all three voiced by Adler). Mom: Candi Milo; Dad: Dee Baker; Cerberus: Jeff Harnell.

"Tales of the Paranoid Worm," by Eddie Fitzgerald. Johnny Worm is tired of being stepped on. He turns into a paranoid worm bent on revenge. Veteran animator/producer Milton Gray helped Fitzgerald crank out the footage.

"Help?" by Italian animator/producer Bruno Bozzetto. A cat goes to the hospital after he pokes his finger while embroidering. When he calls for help, the staff responds with a series of painful tests.

"Strange Things," by Mike Wellins of Sensible Shoes Pictures 3-D in San Francisco, a cartoon using computer-generated imagery. A naive droid's first day on the job at the Museum of Dangerous Things.

"Pizza Boy" (formerly "Pizza Jerk"), created, written and directed by Robert Alvarez. The Pizza Boy has to deliver a pizza in less than five minutes to the Arctic Circle.

"Boid 'n' Woim," created, written and directed by Miles Thompson. A cross-country road trip with two traditional antagonists, a bird and a worm. Layouts by Bialk, Ramirez and Kausler. Animation directors: Alvarez and Kausler.

"Mina and the Count," created, written and directed by Rob Renzetti. Mark Hamill voices the Count, a vampire who befriends seven-year-old Mina (Ashley Johnson) when his "biting schedule" is confused. Igor: Bennett; Dad: Michael Bell. Art direction: Thompson. Layout: Thompson and Bialk. Character designer: Craig McCracken.

**Ever been to London? Well then, you'll simply love Pfish and Chip in "Short Phuse."**

All World Premiere Toons Art: Copyright 1995 Hanna-Barbera Cartoons, Inc.

"Hillbilly Blue," created by Michael Ryan; directed by Hartman; written by Hartman and Ryan. Eustice Crawdad (Bennett) talks Mortichae Muskrat (Adler) into traveling to New Orleans, where they treat "crawdads in style"—on the menu. Elvis: Bennett; Cook/Cop/Woman/Health Inspector: Paulsen; Trucker/French Chef/Fat Guy/Colonel: Jim Cummings.

Dino in "The Great Egg-scape," directed by Joe Barbera. When a Thunderbuttasaurus egg lands on Dino's doorstep, Dino nurses the egg until the real mom shows up. Dino: Frank Welker; Baby: Russi Taylor; Scientist/Guard/Cop #2: Nick Jameson; Cop #1:

One Minute (These are First Prize winners):

Direction: *Sleepy Guy PDI*, by Raman Hui.

Design: *Close to You*, by Maciek Albrecht.

Animation: *Nose Hair*, by Bill Plympton.

Soundtrack: *Day-O, A Caribbean Cartoon Caper.*

Concept: *Opposing Views*, by John Schnall.

Professional Films Under One Minute/Best: *Clock*, by Edward Bakst.

Best Student Film: *The Wind*, by Drew King.

**Animated Opportunities:** On March 11, more than a thousand people attended ASIFA-Hollywood's second annual Animation Opportunities Expo, in which industry professionals discussed

Aladdin Art: Copyright 1995 Buena Vista Television

Paulsen; Announcer/Commander: Gary Owens. Storyboard by Barrington Bunce. Background design: Bill Proctor. Background stylist: Bonnie Goodnight; Character design: George Goodchild and Mike Takamoto. Art directors: McCracken and Paul Rudish.

"Wind-up Wolf," written and directed by Bill Hanna. The Big Bad Wolf builds a mechanical duplicate to take on the Three Pigs. Windup Wolf/Big Bad Wolf/Pig #2: Dee Bradley Baker; Pig #1 and #3/Cooking Show Host: Jeanie Elias. Character designs by Takamoto and Goodchild. Storyboards by Tony Benedict and Bunce. Background designs by Mike Moon.

The Powerpuff Girls return in "Crime 101," by writer/director McCracken. Bubbles (Kath Soucie), Blossom (Cathy Cavidini) and Buttercup (E.G. Daily) give lessons in "being bad" to the lousiest villains in Townsville, the Amoeba Boys. Boss Man/Tiny/Skinny Slim: Chuck McCann; Narrator: Ernie Anderson; Anchorman/Police Chief/Judge: Bennett. Layouts by McCracken, Rudish and Bialk. Background designs by Moon.

"Dexter's Laboratory: The Big Sister," created, written and directed by Russian immigrant Genndy Tartakovsky. Boy genius Dexter's experimental cookies make his nosy sister Dee Dee (Allison Moore) a hundred feet tall. Dexter (Chris Cavanaugh) must save the city (Do you think he wants to save his sister?). Mom/Mr. Physics: Soucie; Professor/Cop/Man Anchor/Man #1: Bennett; President/Einstein/Man #2/General/Guy: Welker.

"Johnny Bravo and the Amazon Women," created, written and directed by Van Partible. Ladies man Johnny Bravo (Bennett) ends up on an island of amazingly beautiful women.

"Bloo's Gang," directed by Mike Milo; written by Milo and Harry McLaughlin. What does your dog do when you go to sleep? Bloo the dog turns his doghouse into a pirate ship and invites the neighborhood canines on board for an imaginary adventure.

"Pfish and Chip II: Blammo the Clown," directed by Eugene Mattos; written by Hartman, Mattos, Michael Rann. Bomb disposal experts Pfish and Chip face their greatest challenge yet: a clown named Blammo who is fond of things that go boom.

"Podunk Possum," directed by Joe Orantia; written by Orantia and Elizabeth Stonecipher.

"Babe, He Calls Me," written and directed by Bakshi, followed by three yet to be named shorts by Bakshi.

These are all the shorts commissioned before "What a Cartoon!" premiered February 26 with "Dexter's Laboratory," by Tartakovsky. The first project given the green light since the first eight shorts aired is "Courage, the Cowardly Dog," by John Dilworth. No relation to Scooby Doo.

A sequel to "Sledgehammer O'possum," by Ventura, is "on hold" pending response from focus groups. The character's slapstick nature may be considered too violent for viewers.

Another shelved project starred a redesigned Lippy the Lion and Hardy Har Har in "Rest and Pizzas," by Scott Shaw!

The most popular shorts were "Dexter's," "The Powerpuff Girls" and "Johnny Bravo." A common denominator is that they were all based on student films and reflected the unique, personal vision of their creators, rather than imitating the "gross humor" and spastic graphics approach of *Ren & Stimpy*. An early casualty is Hardluck Duck; you won't see any more of him.

how to break into the business and studios evaluated portfolios. If you missed the event, you can purchase audiocassettes of the 45-minute seminars at $10 per seminar. The information is invaluable if you're interested in the latest industry developments.

#1. *The Role of the Creator in Development.* Harvey Deneroff, moderator; Jerry Beck, Nickelodeon; Ellen Cockrill, Hanna-Barbera; Joy Every, Turner Feature Animation; Mary Harrington, Nickelodeon; Laverne McKinnon, Klasky-Csupo; Guy Vasilovich, Film Roman.

**Emmy night was good to *Disney's Aladdin*—it won three.**

#2. *The Role of the Writer in the Production Process.* Craig Miller, moderator; Joe Ansolabehere and Steve Viksten, Nickelodeon; Gordon Bressack, Film Roman; Irene Mecchi and David Stainton from Disney Feature Animation.

#3 *How to Prepare an Effective Portfolio.* Dave Master from Warner Bros. Feature Animation, moderator; Frank Gladstone and Bill Matthews from Disney Feature Animation; Steve Hickner, Amblimation; Steve Hillenberg, Nickelodeon; Shelly Page, DreamWorks; Stan Phillips, DIC Entertainment; Dave Brain, Film Roman. These veteran studio recruiters discuss what they look for in portfolio submissions, how to submit and what mistakes to avoid in submitting.

#4. *Artist Opportunities in the Industry.* Tom Sito, Disney director and president of the Screen Cartoonists Union, moderator; Craig Bartlett, Nickelodeon; Dave Brain, Film Roman; Frank Gladstone and Bill Matthews, Disney Feature Animation; Kathleen Helppie, Tom Minton and Dave Master, Warner Bros. Animation; Phil Nibbelink, Amblimation.

#5. *The Inside Scoop on the Production Process.* John Cawley, Director of Studio and Overseas Operations, *Spider-Man*, moderator; Baker Bloodworth, Disney Feature Animation; Jonathan Dern, MGM Animation; Paul Fabela, Nickelodeon; Anne Luiting, Film Roman; Liza Ann Warren, Warner Bros. Animation.

#6. *Opportunities and Preparation for Voice-Over Performers.* June Foray, moderator; voice actors Bob Bergen, Gregg Berger, Lucille Bliss and Nancy Cartwright; voice director Ginny McSwain.

#7. *Animation in the Interactive World.* Dug Ward, moderator; Michael Ahn, AND Entertainment; Brian Boyle, Western Technologies; Val Lettera, Sony Interactive; Tom Mott, Virgin Interactive; Danielle Schechter, Iwerks Entertainment.

Write to ASIFA-Hollywood, 725 S. Victory Boulevard, Burbank, CA 91502.

**New Nicktoons:** *Hey Arnold!* is the fifth Nickelodeon animated series, set to premiere this winter. Thirteen episodes will star Arnold, a nine-year-old boy with "a gravity-defying hairdo." We'll see his point-of-view of urban life, subways, bus stops, stray dogs, corner delis, sandlot baseball and rundown boarding houses with quirky neighbors. Arnold must contend with Harold, the neighborhood bully, and Helga, who enjoys tormenting Arnold even though she secretly loves him (huh?).

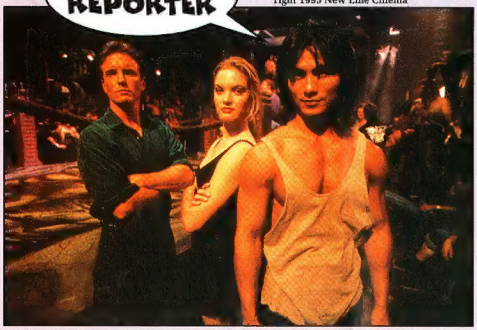
According to Mary Harrington, vice president of production and development, it's the first time in a Nicktoon that real kids provide the voices for all the major characters. The cast wasn't announced at press-time.

Arnold is the creation of executive producer Craig Bartlett. He began his career in Portland, Oregon at Will Vinton Productions doing 3-D stop-motion clay animation. He directed/animated the *Penny* shorts for *Pee-wee's Playhouse* in 1987, and he has also contributed to *Rugrats* and *The Ren & Stimpy Show*. Nickelodeon's Games Animation division is producing the series. Joe Ansolabehere and Steve Viksten are the show's co-producers/writers.

Klasky-Csupo is busy producing 26 more *Aaahh!!! Real Monsters*, for a total of 39. Games Animation is producing a third season (13 episodes) of *Rocko's Modern Life*, for a total of 39 so far; 52 are planned.

*—Bob Miller*

# COMICS REPORTER



Mortal Kombat Photo: R.E. Aron/Copyright 1995 New Line Cinema

**Ready to engage in *Mortal Kombat* are Johnny Cage (Linden Ashby), Sonya Blade (Bridgette Wilson) and Liu Kang (Robin Shou).**

# COMICS SCREEN

All of these projects are live-action unless specified. Those boxed are new or updated since last listing. **Not everything listed will ultimately ever be made.** S: script; D: director; P: producer; EP: executive producer; C: creator; AN: animated; LA: live-action; Syn: syndicated; HB: Hanna-Barbera; Nel: Nelvana; WD: Disney; WB: Warner Bros.; PP: Paramount; U: Universal; Col: Columbia; Am: Amblin; DH: Dark Horse; FR: Film Roman; QDE: Quincy Davis Entertainment. **Attn. all pros:** Info to be added to this list is cheerfully invited. Send to COMICS SCENE, 475 Park Ave. South, 8th Flr., NY, NY 10016. (Info as of 6/2/95)

**Accident Man.** Film. S: Pat Mills, Tony Skinner.

**Adventure Man.** AN. WB. WB Kids' Network.

**Aeon Flux.** MTV. AN.

**The Airtight Garage.** AN. EP: Kurosawa Ent. P: Philippe Rivier. D: Moebius, Katsuhiro Otomo. S: Randy Lofficier.

**Animaniacs.** Moves to WB Kids' Network this fall.

**Annie & the Tomorrow Team.** AN. TV project. Fremantle.

❑ **Archie.** Film. S: Keith Giglio, Juliet Aires. P: Ben Myron. U.

**The Badger.** Film/TV. PP.

**Barbarella.** Film. Nel.

❑ **Barb Wire.** Film. V/DH. W/Pam Anderson. D: Adam Rifkin. P: Mike Richardson, Todd Moyer, Brad Wyman. Shooting.

**Beavis and Butt-head.** AN film. Geffen. S: Mike Judge.

**Betty Boop.** AN film. S: Jerry Rees. EP: R. Fleischer, R. Zanuck.

**Biker Mice from Mars.** Film. P: Al Ruddy, Andre Morgan, David Chan. S: Greg Johnson.

**Blade.** S: David S. Goyer.

❑ **Captain Thunder & Blue Bolt.** Film. PP. P: Joe Wizan. Consultants: Roy & Dann Thomas.

❑ **Captain Zoom.** Made-for-cable film. S: (EP) Brian Levant, Rick Copp & David Goodman. D: Max Tash. Zoom: Daniel Reardon.

**Catwoman.** Film. WB. S: Dan Waters.

**Cisco Kid.** TV movie sequel. W/Jimmy Smits, Cheech Marin. D: Luis Valdez. S: David Taylor. TNT.

❑ **The Crow: City of Angels.** Film sequel. D: Tim Pope. S: David S. Goyer. W/ Vincent Perez.

**Crying Freeman.** Film. D: C. Gans. W/M. Dacascos, Rae Dawn Chong.

**Cyberforce.** AN. Pilot. Fox. Graz Ent.

**Daredevil.** Film. Fox. D: Carlo Carlei. S: Carlei, Chris Columbus. P: Ben Myron, Tony Ludwig, Alan Riche.

❑ **Dennis the Menace.** Sequel. S: Jeff Schechter.

**Dr. Strange.** Film. S: David S. Goyer. Col.

**Donkey Kong Country.** AN series. Nel.

**Doom's IV.** Film. P/S: Rob Liefeld. Am.

**Dudley Do-Right.** Film. U.

**Dungeons & Dragons.** Film. Sweetpea Ent. S: Topper Lilien & Carroll Cartwright.

**Elfquest.** AN film. P: Ed Pressman, Jeremy Chechik.

**Fantastic Four.** Film. D: Chris Columbus.

**Faust.** Film. D: Stuart Gordon. S: David Quinn.

**Felix the Cat.** AN. FR. CBS.

**Fist of the North Star.** Film. D: Tony Randel. W/Gary Daniels, Costas Mandylor.

❑ **Flash Gordon.** Film. S: Steven de Souza. P: Ben Myron, Rick Karo, David Helpern. Madalay-Sony.

**Freakazoid.** AN series. WB/Am.

**From Hell.** Film.

**Gen 13.** AN film. D: Kevin Altieri. Wildstorm Prods.

**Ghost Rider.** Film. S: David S. Goyer. Savoy.

**Gothik.** Film. P: Jeff Most.

**Green Hornet.** Film. U.

**Grimjack.** Film.

**Hate.** AN Film. S: Peter Bagge. Colossal Pictures.

**Hopalong Cassidy.** Film. S: John Milius.

**Incredible Hulk.** Film. U. P: Gale Anne Hurd. S: John Turman.

**Inspector Gadget.** Film. S: J. Loeb III. M. Weisman. U.

❑ **Iron Man.** S: Andrew Chapman. P: John Langley, Elie Cohn, Stephen Chao. EP: Avi Arad, Stan Lee.

**Jonny Quest.** AN & LA films. S: Fred Dekker. New AN series.

**Kull.** Film. U. S: C. Pogue.

**Lt. Blueberry.** Film.

**Little Lulu.** AN. Lulu: Tracey Ullman.

❑ **Lost Universe.** Film. Miramax.

❑ **Luke Cage.** Film. D (&P): John Singleton. S: John Doughrity. P: Ed Pressman.

**Machine.** Film. P: Larry Gordon. DH. U.

❑ **Mark 5.** Film. S: William Wisher, Nick Sagan.

❑ **The Mask.** AN series. FR. CBS. Film sequel shoots fall.

**The Maxx.** MTV AN series.

**Mega Man.** AN syn series.

❑ **The Men in Black.** Film. Col/Am. W/Tommy Lee Jones & Chris O'Donnell. D: Barry Sonnenfeld.

❑ **Mickey Mouse.** New shorts. WD.

❑ **Mr. Hero.** Film. Miramax.

**Mr. Magoo.** Film. Am/WB.

❑ **Modesty Blaise.** Film. Miramax. P: Marcelo Anciano, Michael Berrow. Quentin Tarantino may direct.

❑ **Momma.** AN project. Colossal Pictures.

**Mortal Kombat.** Film. P: Larry Kasanoff. D: Paul Anderson. August debut.

**Mutant Chronicles.** Film. P: Ed Pressman. S: Philip Eisner.

**NeverEnding Story.** AN. Nel.

**Nexus.** AN film. HB.

**Peanuts.** Film. P/S: John Hughes. WB.

❑ **The Phantom.** Film. PP. Probably dead.

**Pinky & the Brain.** AN series. WB/Am. WB Kids' Network.

**Pit Bulls.** Film. P: Larry Gordon. DH. U.

**Plastic Man.** Film. WB/Am.

**Prince Valiant.** Film. S: M. Beckner, Roger Kumble, Marlene King. Neue Constantin.

**Prophet.** Film. Tristar. P: Rob Liefeld.

❑ **Rock City.** Film. Blue Turtle, Inc.

**The Rocky Horror Show.** AN series. Nel.

❑ **The Saint.** Film. PP. D: Philip Noyce. Shooting begins fall.

**Sandman.** Film. S: Ted Elliott, Terry Rossio. P: Oren Koules, Alan Riche.

**Sand Sharks.** AN series. DIC.

**Sgt. Rock.** Film. P: Joel Silver. S/D: John Milius. WB.

**Silver Surfer.** Film. S: John Turman. Neue Constantin.

**Sin City.** S: Frank Miller.

❑ **Spawn.** Film. S: Alan McElroy.

❑ **Spider-Man.** LA film. Delayed by legal problems.

**The Spirit.** LA & AN projects. P: Michael Uslan, Ben Melniker.

**Spy vs. Spy.** Film. S: Gene Quintano. P: Steven Tisch, QDE.

**Stretch Armstrong.** Film. D: William Dear. S: Mike Werb, Michael Colleary.

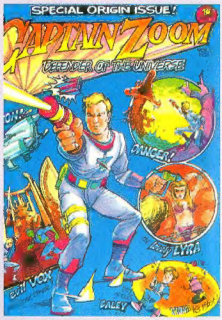
❑ **Superman.** Film. S: Jonathan Lemkin. Separate from *Lois & Clark*, TV series renewed for third season.

**Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV.** Film. New Line.

**Terry & the Pirates.** TV.

**Vampirella.** Film.

**V for Vendetta.** Film. S: Hilary Henkin. D: Brett Leonard. P: Joel Silver. WB.




Zoom Art: Courtesy Brian Levant

**Daniel (*Ed Wood*) Reardon is the SF TV hero taking on evil in *The Adventures of Captain Zoom in Outer Space*, a made-for-cable TV movie premiering shortly on Starz. Ron Perlman's the bad guy.**

**Virus.** Film. DH. S: Chuck Pfarrer. P: Gale Anne Hurd. U.

**X.** Film. DH. U.

**X-Men.** Film. Fox. P: Lauren Shuler-Donner. S: Andrew Kevin Walker.

**Yummy Fur.** Film. D: Bruce McDonald. Yorktown Prods.

**Zen Intergalactic Ninja.** Film. D: Brian Yuzna.

**Zorro.** Film. D: Mikael Salomon. TriStar. S: Terry Rossio, Ted Elliott.

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